

Gospel-Mysteries Unveil'd:

OR, AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

PARABLES,

AND

Express Similitudes

OF OUR

Lord and Saviour

JESUS CHRIST.

Wherein also many Things are Doctrinally
Handled and Improv'd by way of Application.

By BENJAMIN KEACH, Author of ΤΡΟΠΟΛΟΓΙΑ, *A Key
to Open Scripture Metaphors.*

BOOK III.

John 3. 12. *If I have told you of Earthly things, and ye Believe not ; how shall
you Believe if I tell you of Heavenly things.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Benj. Harris* ; for *William Marshal*, at the
Bible in Newgate-street, MDCCI.

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PARABLES

Expressed in

OF THE

Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ.

Written in the most plain and Doctrinally
Handed manner, as a way of Application.

By the Rev. Mr. John W. Alden, of the Church of England.

BOOK III.

Printed by W. H. Alden, at the Church of England, in the City of London.

LONDON,

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T H E
P A R A B L E
O F T H E
Marriage Supper
O P E N E D.

Sermon I.

MATTHEW XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, &c.

*And Jesus answered, and spake again to them by Parables, and said, v. 1.
The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, that made a Marriage for his Son. v. 2.*

And sent forth his Servants to call them that were bidden to the Wedding, and they would not come. v. 3.

Again, he sent forth other Servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my Dinner, my Oxen and my Fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, Come to the Marriage. v. 4.

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise. v. 5.

To the 14th Verse, where this Parable endeth.

Brethren,

I Shall in speaking unto this Parable, take my usual Method, viz.

1. Give the Scope of the Parable.
2. Open every part of it particularly.
3. Raise several Propositions from divers chief Things that are contained therein.
4. Make Application of each Proposition.

1. As to the chief or main Design or Scope of the Parable.

1. Our Blessed Saviour hereby strove to convince the Jews of God's great Love unto them. And not only of his Love to the Jews, but it tends to manifest his infinite Love and Goodness unto the Gentiles also, and of God's gracious calling of them, upon the Jews rejecting of his Son. Brethren, What an amazing Condescension is here shewed, that the great King, or Almighty God, the Creator of all Things, should send his own Son to become a Surety for, and a Suitor to the lost Children of Adam.

Here is no Marriage offered, nor designed, for the fallen Angels; God did not send his Son to Espouse Angelick Nature, Verily, he took not unto

him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of ^{Heb. II. 16.} Abraham. Look what Nature the Son of God took hold of, that Nature, or those of that sort, he came to Espouse and to Marry unto himself for ever; and that was the Nature of Man.

2. We, by the Design and Scope of this Parable also, may see Jesus Christ discovereth to all the World, the horrible Sin and Ingratitude of the Jews, who had the first offer of his great Love and Mercy; he said himself, *he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* That is, not first sent, for he was also sent to be God's Salvation to the ends of the Earth, *he came unto his own,* ^{Joh. I. 11.} *and his own received him not,* they Rejected him, and barbarously Murthered him, instead of Espousing him.

3. This Parable seems to shew the Cause or Reason of the Ruin, Rejection, and utter Destruction of the Jewish Nation, and the City Jerusalem; or what was the Cause why Wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

4. It also discovers that many who have the outward Ministration of the Gospel,

Gospel, shall perish eternally; tho many are called, by the external Preaching thereof, yet but few are chosen; the Gospel comes in Word only to the most of those who have it, and in Power to none but those who are Elected unto Eternal Life, they are such only that are ordained to Everlasting Life, that Believe.

Act. XIII.
48.

5. The Design and Scope of this Parable, shews also, it was the gracious Purpose of God, upon the rejection of the Jews, to call the Gentiles.

6. Moreover, it discovers that great Unworthiness of poor Sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, to have this most gracious Offer of Christ made unto them. For,

1. Those Jews, which were called and invited to this Marriage, who came, were such that lay in the Streets and Lanes of the City, which were *the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind*; such who were meer Beggars, the baser sort, such that were utterly unworthy to come into the presence of such a King's Court, and much more unworthy to have an Offer to become the Spouse of Jesus Christ, or to be imbraced in his Arms.

2. And those of the Gentiles, who were effectually called, were such that were found in the High-ways, and under Hedges; *And the Lord said unto his Servants, Go to the High-ways and Hedges, and compel them to come in.*

7. It shews also that every Man and Woman, that Rejects the offers of Grace, (tho not such that were Elected) shall be left without any Excuse at the Day of Judgment, *They shall be all Speechless*; and it will be manifested unto their own Consciences, that it was for their own horrid Wickedness, and refusing to accept of Christ, that they shall be Cast and Condemned at that Day; they preferring the Things of this Life, viz. their Sinful Profits and Pleasures, above Jesus Christ, or eternal Life and Glory in Heaven.

St. Luke hath this Parable, Chap. XIV. and, in some things, is more large and full than Matthew, which has occasioned some to think, that our Saviour spake the same Parable twice, upon different Circumstances, or Reasons; Let that be how it will, I purpose to speak unto this Parable, with respect had unto both the *Evangelists*, and not give a distinct Exposition. But to proceed,

The
Parts o-
pen'd.

1. By the *Kingdom of Heaven*, here, I understand, is signified, the Proceedings and Equable, or Righteous, Dispensation of God, in the Dispensation of the Gospel, with the Children of Men, in order to their entrance into the Kingdom of Glory.

What is
meant by
the King.

2. By the *certain King*, is, no doubt, meant the Great God and King of Hea-

ven and Earth, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

3. By his Son, is intended, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, by an Eternal Generation, as well as by that wonderful Conception of his in the Womb of the Virgin, and as so considered, he became a more fit and suitable Match, and Bridegroom, to Espouse and Marry Sinners, being *Flesh of our Flesh, and Bone of our Bone*.

4. By the Marriage, is meant, the Souls Union with the Lord Christ, or that Divine and Spiritual Marriage with him, according to the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, it being evident, that in divers places of the holy Scripture, that our Union, by Faith, with the Lord Jesus Christ, is set forth by a Marriage; he is called a Bridegroom, and the Church his Bride, he an Husband, and Believers his Spouse or Wife: *I have Espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a chaste Virgin unto Christ.*

5. *I have prepared my Dinner.* Luke calls it a Supper, a certain Man made a great Supper, and bade many. Both signify the same thing this great Feast represents.

1. (As some conclude) the Marriage it self, because our feeding upon Jesus Christ, by Faith, or our first receiving him, is our Espousing of him. I will not deny, but in a more strict Sense, this may be held forth hereby.

2. Yet more comprehensibly, it may signify those Rich and Heavenly Dainties, or all those Spiritual Varieties God has provided for all those who Believe in him, or that come to this Marriage; which I purpose hereafter more particularly to open.

Some think our Lord may allude to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, Rev. XIX. but I can see no reason for that; none certainly, that are invited to that Supper, will refuse to come; nor can that refer to the Souls first Espousing of Jesus Christ.

6. The Persons that were first invited to this Marriage Feast, to Eat of the King's Dainties, or Espouse Jesus Christ, were the Jews, who refused generally to come.

7. The Servants, that were first sent to call Persons to the Wedding, may, and doubtless doth, signify the Holy Prophets, and John the Baptist, unto whom the Jews, or People of Israel refused to hearken, v. 3.

8. Again, he sent forth other Servants, which may intend the holy Apostles, and other faithful Ministers of the Gospel, in the Primitive times.

9. By the Oxen and Fatlings being killed, and all things being ready, may refer to

Who the
Persons
are that
were in-
vited to
this Din-
ner.

Who the
Servants
first sent
were.

Who the
other next
sent were.

the Sacrifices that were under the Law Typically, but to Christ and the Gospel Feasts chiefly; they were Types of Christ, and of his bloody Sacrifice, but the *Antitype* being now come, every thing is more perfectly compleated, and so all things made ready; that is, God is ready to receive all that come to him by Christ, he is ready to give Christ to the Souls of Sinners.

Jesus Christ is ready to Espouse them, and all of them, that come to him by Faith. Justification, Pardon of Sin, and Adoption, &c. is ready, Christ being now actually Slain, or Crucified for us.

What is meant by their making light of it. 10. By their making light of it, v. 5. is shewed the Jews slighting, and contemning the Grace, glorious Priviledges and Blessings of the Gospel.

And went their ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise.

Luk. XIV. 18. This signifies, That it is for the sake and love of the World, that Sinners do reject Jesus Christ; Luke is more particular, pray see what he saith, and they all with one Consent began to make Excuse.

The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it, I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray have me excused.

And another said, I have married a Wife, and I cannot come. The

Two first seem more modest in their Answer, they pray to be excused; the last said peremptorily, I cannot come.

We may perceive what is the Cause that Men and Women refuse to accept Jesus Christ.

1. Worldly Cares, Incumbrances, Secular Business, or the Concernments of this Life, in providing Earthly Things.

2. The Riches or Love of Wealth, or Earthly Honour.

3. But it appears that sensual Satisfaction, or the inordinate love of Pleasures, is that which hath the greatest power over Men, and which drowns, and swallows up the Spirit and Soul of Mortals; for this sort say, they cannot come.

11. And the remnant took his Servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them, vers. 6.

What is meant by slaying the Servants. This refers unto that Cruelty which the Jews used towards the Holy Prophets, the Apostles, and Ministers of Jesus Christ.

Act. VII. Act. XII. They slew many of the Prophets, and cut off the Head of John the Baptist; and also Persecuted unto Death divers of Christ's own Disciples; They Stoned holy Stephen, and slew James with the edge of the Sword.

12. But when the King heard thereof, he sent forth his Armies, and destroyed those Murderers, and burnt down their City, vers. 7.

This no doubt containeth a Prophecy of the Roman Armies, who made such a fearful Slaughter of the Jews, which fell out about Fifty Years after the Death of our Blessed Lord; and by their City is meant Jerusalem, which was burnt and consumed to Ashes, as also was the Holy Temple. Let Men boast if they will, in Persecuting the Saints, that they do but Execute the Law upon them, yet it is clear they are Murderers; Let them do it by Law, or without Law, as cursed Murderers, God will Judge them, and many times, for this great Evil, he brings Temporal Punishment and Death upon them in this World.

13. Then he saith to his Servants, the Wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, were not worthy, v. 8.

These were the Jews; they were first bidden. He came to his own, but his own received him not.

Luke is here more particular: The Master of the House being angry, said unto his servants, go out quickly into the Streets

and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor and the maimed, and the Halt and the Blind.

The Rich and Honourable ones, the Pharisees and Lawyers, utterly rejected the offers of Grace by Jesus Christ.

Therefore God sent his Ministers to call the Poor, even such who were accounted the base Things of the World, even mean, low and contemptible Persons, set forth here by the Maimed, Halt and Blind.

Which may also denote the Sense that those Persons have of themselves, who do receive Jesus Christ, even such that are lost and utterly undone in their own eyes.

I am sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The Poor, it is said, had the Gospel preached unto them, and they received it.

The Maim, and Halt, and Blind, therefore signifieth the worst of Men, such as the Publicans, Harlots, or great Sinners; not only low and mean in the World, but such as were lost and undone in their own sight, or helpless ones; such who could not help themselves, but stood in need of the Charity of others, denoting, that those who refused to come unto the Wedding, saw no need or want of a Christ, or of his Righteousness to cloath them, nor of his Eye-salve to give them Sight, nor of his Flesh and Blood to Feed them, nor of his Wine to cheer them.

14. As many as you find, bid to the Marriage, v. 9.

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Luke saith, Bring in hither the Poor, &c.
 Not that Ministers can bring them by any power of theirs, no, none can bring them but Christ himself, it is he that must bring them in, or bring home the lost Sheep, by laying them on his Shoulders, or by exerting his own most mighty and irresistible Power, by the operations of his own Spirit upon their Hearts.

Eph. I. 18, 19, 20.
 But Ministers are to do what they can, they are to invite them, press them, in-treat and perswade them to come.

Luke saith, So these Servants went into the high ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the Wedding was furnished with Guests, will.
 They brought in all they could per-swade to adhere unto them, tho' some were not true Converts. The Net of the Gospel and visible Church, take good and bad, some wise and some foolish Virgins.

Luk. XIV. 22.
 Luke saith, And the Servant said, It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

A Faithful Ministry will do what their Lord commands them to do, and yet there is room. Let as many as will come unto Christ, yet there is still room for more; in God's heart is room enough for millions of Souls; and in God's House there is not only Bread enough, and to spare, but room enough also.

Mat. XX. 10.
 And the Lord said unto the Servants, Go out into the high ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled, *Luk. XIV. 23.*

This last Commission, no doubt, refers to Christ's sending his Servants to invite or call in Sinners, of the Gentiles, tho' the Jews were first to have Salvation offered unto them, yet the Grace of God is extended further, even to the Gentiles also, that so Christ might be God's Salvation to the ends of the Earth. The Jews were such that dwelt in the City, i. e. were in Covenant with God, according to that Covenant of Peculiarallity made with Abraham, and his Fleahly Seed, as such. But the Gentiles were said to be a-far off, or out of the City or Church of the Jews, as Strangers and Straglers, or Poor out-casts, such that lay in the High ways, and under Hedges.

Compel them to come in.
 There hath been long Contention amongst Christians and Learned Men, what our Saviour meaneth by this Compulsion; some would from hence infer that outward Force and Violence is hereby intended, even to pull them in by Head and Shoulders, or drive them by Whips and Cudgels, or by Penal Laws, or by Fire and Faggot to Frighten them; which certainly is far from the Sense of

the Text, for the Will of man admits of no Violence or External force, by the Civil Magistrates; so that outward Compulsion, hath no colour of Foundation from hence; for neither Christ or his Apostles ever used any such way, to make Men Christians, or to receive the Truth. Those that refused to come in, or would not embrace the Gospel, they were only to shake off the dust of their Feet, as a Witness against them.

Therefore this Compulsion only denotes the powerful Arguments they should use, together with those Efficacious Influences and Operations of the Spirit, which Christ puts forth with the Preaching of the Gospel; it being by the Ministration of the Word, that he makes the Souls of obstinate Sinners willing; They are said to Compel them, whereas indeed it is Christ by them; They are but Instruments in Christ's hand in the doing of it: *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.* The Gospel hath to do with Men as rational Creatures, and as such Christ is presented unto them, and Arguments are used to perswade them to accept of him, but because all are naturally Blind, and their Wills are stubborn, and obstinate, ye will not come to me, that you may have life. Christ, by the Preaching of the Gospel, and Operations of his Spirit, enlighteneth their Understandings, and bows and inclines their Wills. And this is that which is only meant by Compelling them to come to the Wedding. Neither can this seem strange to any that observe divers places of Scripture, where the same Word is used, 'tis said Christ Compelled his Disciples to go into a Ship, *ἠνάγκασεν*, but it is evident, he used no Sword, Staves, or Whips, or Pecuniary Mulcts to force them. Also it is said, the two Disciples compelled Christ to stay with them, *They constrained him, saying, abide with us* *ἠναγκαλίσαντο*. Moreover it is said Peter compelled the Gentiles, to do as the Jews, *Gal. 2. 14. Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* yet this doth not signify any act of Violence; no, but this was done by his Example. Such Vertue sometimes Example hath on mens Spirits; he did not call in the Power of Magistrates to force the Gentiles.--- Likewise it is said, that the Whorish Woman compelled the Young Man to commit Folly with her, *With much fair speeches she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her Lips she forced him.* This was a forcing or compelling to do a wicked Deed, but external Violence she used not, neither was she able that way to compel him. It is true, all that believe and receive Jesus Christ are compelled; Grace hath such Power in it,

What meant the high ways and hedges.

What is meant by compelling them to come in.

No external Violence to be used in the Conversion of Sinners.

Mat. XIV. 22.

Luk. XXIV. 29.

Prov. VII. 27.

it, that it doth in some Sense constrain
2 Cor. V. the soul, the love of Christ constraineth us.

15. And as the Spouse says, it draws, but how
Cant. I. 4. is it? Is it against the consent of the
will? Is there any force put upon that

Grace in-
clines the
Will.

noble Faculty? No sure, the Will acts
freely, and is not denied its own proper
choice, but it is over ruled and perswa-

ded by the workings of the Holy Ghost,
cheerfully and freely to chuse and ac-

cept of Jesus Christ, *My people shall be*
Pi. CX. 3. *willing in the day of my power.* Jesus

Christ as I have formerly told you, will
accept of no pres'd Soldiers, no, no,

they must be all Volunteers, but natu-

rally the will is corrupt, depraved, and
wills only that which is evil, and it is

averse to all things that are truly and
spiritually Good, and so it remains, until

Grace, or the Holy Spirit takes away
that enmity and averfness which is in it,

and so makes it willing; and this is done
generally by the powerful Preaching of

the Gospel, God being pleased to ac-

company it with the operations of his
own Spirit and Divine Power; and

this is all, no doubt, which is meant by
compelling them to come in.

16. *As many as they found both good and bad.*
This denotes, some of all sorts are called

by the Preaching of the Gospel, good and
bad; not that there are any good before

Grace and Effectual Vocation; No, no,
all are gone out of the way, all are become

filthy; there is none that doth good, no, not one.
Rom. III. 12.

1. But yet Comparatively, some may
be said to be Good, that is, not so

notoriously Wicked as others are, i. e.
they may be Merciful Persons, who are

called Good, that being a choice Mo-
ral Virtue, but much more precious

when it proceeds from the Holy Spi-
rit, as the Fruit thereof.

2. But I rather take it with respect
had, to what they prove in the end,

viz. some appear to be Sincere and
Gracious Persons, and others Hypo-

crites, or false Professors, and have no
Wedding Garment.

17. *And when the King came to see the*
Guests, v. 11. *and saw there a Man that had not on a*

This certainly refers to the Day of
Judgment, or Second coming of Jesus

Christ, when it will appear who are
Sincere ones, and who are not; or who

are wise Virgins, and who Foolish. Ma-
ny Unholy or Unsanctified Souls get

into the Church, which may not be
discovered until that day that the King

comes to view the Guests; Christ then
will make a Discrimination, then all

shall discern between the Righteous and
the Wicked.
Mal. III. 18.

He saw there a Man that had not on a
Wedding Garment.

The Custom of the Jews was such (as
some note) that all that were Bid to

Weddings, had a *Wedding Garment*, or
if not, they were with great Shame put

out, it is thought that our Lord alludes
to that Practice; the *Wedding Garment*,

no doubt, is Jesus Christ, whom we are
to put on: *But put ye on the Lord Jesus*

Christ, &c. Rom. XIII 14.

Jesus Christ must be put on two man-
ner of Ways.

1. For Justification, by which the Soul
is cloathed with his Righteousness, this

is as I conceive principally intended here,
and is properly the *Wedding Garment*,

and so generally understood by all sound
Expositors.

2. Yet Christ is also at the same time
put on by Faith, for our Sanctification;

and this is chiefly meant in that place,
Rom. XIII. 14. *on whom ye have*

These Thy my Brethren, tho they are
distinct in some respects and are not to

be confounded, yet the one is never
without the other, for where Justifica-

tion is, there is also Sanctification; a
Man is not Sanctified that is not Justified,

nor are any actually Justified that are
not Sanctified; tho it is true, *God Justifi-*

feth the ungodly, i. e. They are ungodly
just at the time when God first Justified

them, they are not Holy and Sancti-
fied Persons before they are Justified,

because it is the Righteousness of Christ
alone that is the matter of our Justifi-

cation before God, which no Man hath
imputed unto him until he believe in Je-

sus Christ; but tho they are all ungod-
ly ones, just at the time when God

Justified them, i. e. he finds them ungod-
ly, when he comes to pass the Act of

free Justification upon them; yet God
doth not leave them Unsanctified by

the Spirit; *But ye are Sanctified, but ye are*

Justified, &c. 1 Cor. VI. 11, 12.

Therefore it is evident, that Faith
(which is God's free Gift) hath a two-

fold Office (as elsewhere I have shew-
ed.)

1. By the Ordination and Appointment
of God, in respect had to Christ, whom

it apprehendeth and applies; it is said to
Justify us, not as a Divine habit, or act,

but only in respect of the object it taketh
hold of, and receiveth.

2. Also in respect of its own blessed
inward Virtue, and Quality; it also Pur-

ges the Soul, and Sanctifieth the whole
Man: *And put no difference between us and*

them, purifying their hearts by Faith; but
pray note, that Faith is an Instrument,

and that Christ's Righteousness is the
Material Cause of our Justification.

So that some conceive the *Wedding*

Garment, may comprehend both our Ju-

stification, and our Sanctification also, tho
more primarily and directly the Right-

eous-

What was
the Cus-
tom of
the Jews
at Wed-
dings.

Rom. XIII
14.

What is
meant by
the Wed-
ding Gar-
ment.

See the
Parable of
the Prodi-
gal Son,
Luke. XV.

No Man
is actually
Justified,
but he is
also San-
ctified.
Rom. 4: 5.

1 Cor. VI.
11, 12.
Faith
hath a
two-fold
Office.

Acts XV.

teousness of Justification; without which there is no Acceptation here, nor will there be hereafter.

18. *And he said, Friend, how camest thou hither, not having a Wedding Garment? and he was speechless.*

How camest thou into my Church, or amongst my People, who are my welcome Guests, seeing thou hast no true Faith, no robe of Righteousness? Thou art naked, O wretched Soul! darest thou appear in my presence, naked, and not be ashamed and confounded? thinkest thou that thy own good Works or inherent Righteousness, will render thee accepted?

And he was Speechless.

What is meant by his being Speechless. His being Speechless, signifies, that all such persons that either reject Jesus Christ, and so make no visible profession of him at all, or such who do profess him, yet are Unbelievers or Hypocrites, they shall be left without any Excuse in the great Day, they shall have no Plea, no Pretence whatsoever.

Sinners shall have no Excuse at the last Day. One shall not say, Lord, I was a poor Ignorant Man, I was not Learned, my Parents, being low in the World, were not able to put me to School, to learn me to Read thy Word, or else they were Wicked, and would not do it; pray let me be Excused.

Also another shall not say, I was a sober Person, I led an honest moral Life, I was no notorious Sinner, let me be Spared, and Excused.

A Third shall not say, Lord, I was a poor young Person, and thought Religion did not belong to me, but unto those of riper years; I purposed when I grew older to mind the Concernments of my Soul, I thought I might do as other young Men and Women did; let me be Excused.

Another shall not say, Lord, I was not Elected, as these were, let me be Excused. No, this will be no Plea or Excuse, in the great Day; then they will see and know that the cause of their Damnation will be Just and Righteous, it being the only Procurement of their own Evil Doings, and for making Light of the Gospel and offers of Grace.

Moreover, another shall not say, Lord, I was misled by my Teachers, they told me I was a Christian, a good Churchman, and that I needed not to doubt of my Salvation, tho I was a Swearer, a Drunkard, a Carnal Person, yet by my keeping to the Church, and hearing Prayers read, and by coming once or twice in the year to receive the Sacrament, my condition was good: Also I was laid in the Grave as a dear Brother, or a dear Sister in Christ, in a full and certain hope of a blessed Resurrection: Let me be Excused.

Another shall not say, Lord, I was deluded by false Teachers, and sucked in (as I now perceive) damnable Errors and Heresies, even denying thee to be the true Saviour, and Justification by thy Righteousness and Merits, and was led to trust to the Light within. I was told by Deceivers, that that was the true Christ, and only Saviour, and that if I was led by that, it would convince me of all Sin, lead me into all Truth, cleanse me from Sin, and eternally save me. Nay, Lord, they told me that my Body would not be raised again at the last Day, and I believed them. They were cunning Impostors, and by their outward Conversations, which seemed so devout, I was Blinded, and cast off that holy Profession, which I once made, and Ordinances, which I once owned. O let them Answer for me, and let me be Excused.

I say, these shall be Speechless also, and shall have nothing to say or plead, why the Sentence of eternal Death should not pass upon them: May not Christ say, you had my Word to Direct you, Moses and the Prophets, and Writings of my Apostles; you had also my faithful Ministers, who told you they were Enemies to me, and grand Deceivers, and if you were led by them, and renounce the true Faith, you would certainly Perish for ever? but you were Proud and Conceited, and Magnify'd your own Wisdom, above what was written in my Word, and above the Wisdom of my Faithful Ministers; therefore your Damnation is just upon you.

Again, another shall not, in that day, say, Lord, I was a professor of thy holy Name and Truth; nay, I had right Notions of the great Fundamentals of the Gospel; I saw that all Men were lost in the first Adam, and that they were under Wrath, and the Curse of thy Holy Law; and I saw no way to be saved, but by thy Righteousness, and by the Merits of thy Blood; and thou didst give a full Satisfaction to the Justice of God, and that all that Believed in thee should not Perish, but have Eternal Life. Lord, I believed these things, I owned thee to be the Son of God, equal with thy Father, and understood wherefore thou didst become Man, or assumed our Nature. Nay, I believed all the Articles of the True Christian Faith, and also became a Member of a True Visible Church, and was Baptized, and broke Bread with them often, and was called a Brother, and I also gave to thy poor Saints. I say, such a Plea of Hypocrites will not be heard at that day, but these shall be Speechless also.

May not Christ say unto them, Were you not told that a Man might thus Believe,

lieve, and thus Practice, and go further too, and yet be but almost a Christian. Was not you told by my Faithful Ministers, that except you were born again, you could not enter into the Kingdom of God? and that if you allowed your selves in any one Sin, you would certainly be damned? or, if you loved this World more than me, or Son or Daughter more than me, you were not worthy of me? nay, you was told by your own Conscience, that you lived in Pride, and were guilty of Lying, and of the Sin of Covetousness, your heart was set upon the World, you did not what you did out of a right Principle, nor to a right End; it was not my Glory which you aimed at, but your own Vain-Glory or outward Profit, therefore your Damnation is Just and Righteous.

Lastly, Another shall not say, Lord, I was a Preacher of thy Gospel, and my Words were Blessed by thee, to the Conversion of many Sinners: These also, if not truly Gracious, but were unregenerated Persons, (tho God might bless his own Word which they

Preached) shall have no Plea, when they come to stand at God's Bar; these also shall be Speechless.

Object. But is it not said, That many will say in that day, Lord, we have prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? How then is it said, all shall be Speechless?

Ans. I Answer, being Speechless doth not denote that none shall make any Answer, or not Plead to be Freed from the dreadful Sentence, but these shall soon become Speechless also, when Christ shall say, How camest thou hither, not having on a Wedding Garment? That Word, will Silence all, or make them all Speechless; this Word holds forth, as I said before, that no Sinner shall have any Plea which shall be heard, or stand them in any stead in the Great Day; Every Man's own Conscience shall Witness against him, and Accuse and Condemn him in that Day, if ungodly: See Rom. II. 15, 16. God will be Justified when he Speakest, and Clear when he Judgest. So much at this time.

S E R M O N II.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

19. Then said the King to his Servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter Darknes, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth.

such thing, but ye my Servants, the holy Angels, Take him away, &c.

20. Take him away, and bind him hand and foot.

By taking him away, may denote that fearful Separation of each ungodly Soul from Jesus Christ and his Saints for ever, according to that passage, Mat. XXIII. Depart from me ye Cursed. O how amazing is this Word, Take him away, he has nothing to say! How have many poor Condemned Criminals trembled when they heard the Judge say, Take them away, I will hear no more, let them Dye!

By Binding him Hand and Foot, may signify his irrecoverable State; he is Tyed and Bound in such Chains of Darknes, that being once in Hell, there will be no getting out.

Their Enmity and Averseness to God will be Eternal; the Damned hated God when they lived on Earth, and they will Hate and Blaspheme him for ever, when they are thrown into Hell.

But this Binding Hand and Foot, may also signify, that Sense they shall have of the Eternal Decree and Purpose of God,

Sermon II.
on this
Parable,
Octob. II.
1696.

Some think our Blessed Lord still alludes to that Jewish Custom of putting them out of doors, who came to a Wedding, that had not on a Wedding Garment, tho it was never so Dark and Dismal a Night.

But, alas! what a small thing or Punishment was that to such, to this here mentioned by our Blessed Saviour?

1. By the Servants, My Brethren, I conceive, are meant the Holy Angels, not the Devils, because the Devils shall then, no doubt, be Prisoners themselves; they shall at that Day be Arraigned, and bejoyntly Sentenced, with all Hypocrites and Unbelievers to eternal Flames of Divine Wrath and Vengeance. All Condemned Sinners must go to Hell at that Day, with the Devil and his Angels; therefore it will not be, take him Devils, and bind him hand and foot, as I think I have read in some good Book; I know no reason any Man hath to affirm any

Who are
the Ser-
vants that
must bind
such that
want the
Wedding
Garment.

Ma. XXV.
41.

What is
meant by
binding
him hand
and foot.

C c c c c

God, touching the endlessness of their Torment, together with that Sense they will have upon their Consciences of their utter Impossibility of ever Satisfying divine Justice ; for there they must lye, till they have paid the uttermost Farthing.

What is meant by utter darkness.

21. By utter Darkness is meant the Lake of Fire, where the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched.

It is called utter Darkness, because there will be no Light of God's gracious Presence ; no Glimpse of the least Comfort, or Hope of ever seeing Light ; or that it will be ever Better with them.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. This Denotes, that intollerable Pain and Anguish such shall feel, and endure for ever ; they lying in Flames of Wrath, without the least Hopes of Ease, or Redemption out of that place.

What is meant by that word Many are Called.

22. For many are Called, but few are chosen, v. 14. God, by the Gospel, calls many ; Multitudes have the Word of God preached to them, but none find and feel the Power and Efficaciousness of it upon their own Hearts, but such, who from the Beginning were Chosen to Salvation ; yet will the Judgment of God be just upon all Reprobates ; for, had not God, out of Love and Mercy, Elected some, and pull'd them as Brands out of the Fire, all, yea, every Soul, would wilfully and obstinately have Cast away themselves, and have Perish'd for ever. No doubt God had been Just and Righteous, if he had executed his Wrath upon the whole Posterity of Adam, as he did upon the Fallen Angels : Man's Destruction is wholly of himself, as the Punishment and Demerit of his own Sin and Transgression.

Brethren, Is a Prince Unjust, because he Saves a few vile and wicked Traitors and Murtherers, out of a Multitude of them who were alike Guilty ? Or, manifesteth his Mercy to some ; as he also manifesteth his righteous and just Wrath and Vengeance, and passeth Sentence upon the rest ?

There is a Twofold Call.

There is a Twofold Call ; the one is Common, the other is Special ; the one Ineffectual, the other Effectual ; yet the first will leave the Creature without the least Excuse, because they did not so far adhere to that which they were able to do. No man, my Brethren, ever did improve that Power, and Means of Light and Grace, who is Damned, which he might have done : He that had the one Tallent, hid his Lord's Money : That one Tallent is, as I conceive, natural Light and Knowledge, together with the external Call, and outward Means afforded by the Preaching of the Gospel. Therefore, did not God graciously vouchsafe

another Tallent to some, viz. the Tallent of special Grace, all the whole Race of Mankind had been Lost.

Obj.] But seeing this Man that had not the Wedding Garment, was one of those Beggars, or one of the Maimed, Blind and Halt, how is it that he is Condemned for not having a Wedding Garment ? How should such a Wretch get a Wedding Garment ?

Ans.] This Wedding Garment God doth not require Men to get by their own Money, or spin it out of their own Bowels, by their own good Works. No, no, it is given Freely ; but this Man never sought it by Faith in Christ, but appears in his own Righteousness, or rather Filthiness, not seeing the Necessity of the Righteousness of Christ, and of the Grace of Faith.

I shall now proceed.

DOCTRINE.

That the great God hath out of his infinite Love and Mercy, sent his own Son to Espouse and Marry poor Sinners, or to take them into Union with himself.

1. I shall Open what this marriage Feast doth Import, or Comprehend ; there being something more Implied than is Expressed.

2. I shall prove, That it is the great and true Interest of Sinners, to accept this Offer and Invitation, i. e. to Espouse Christ.

3. I shall Open What the marriage Feast is, and shew you the Nature of those Dainties which are provided.

First, This Marriage doth hold forth or Comprehend the good Will of God the Father unto Man.

This Marriage doth Comprehend,

The King made the marriage. God the Father is the King (as you heard) he is the first and chief Agent in it ; the Son doth not first Chuse for himself, and ask the Father's Consent, as it is commonly among men ; No, no, but it is the Father that made the first Motion to the Son, of this great and so glorious a Design, and Purpose of Love and Grace to Sinners.

1. The Contrivance of our Salvation is in the Scripture ascribed unto God the Father : He is (as one most excellently shews) the prime Author of Man's actual Reconciliation. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself. The Father is set forth as the Fountain of Life, the Original of all true Good, and First Cause of all things, especially of all supreme and glorious Acts and Works of Mercy, and Kindness unto Man. The Father is the first in all Divine Operations, as well as the First Person in the Trinity ; as he is the First in Creation, so also in Reconciliation and Redemption,

1. The wonderful Love of God the Father. Charnock, Voll. II. 2 Cor. V. 18, 19.

The love of God the Father, is spring or rise of our Salvation. on; the Father being Offended and Injured by Man's Sin, in his *Holiness, Justice, and Bounty*, it is necessary that he first approve of, and appoint the way by which he will admit Terms of Peace, Love and Favour, to be offered unto Mankind.

Besides, had not the Father been the first and prime Agent and Author in proposing this Marriage, it would render the Son more Merciful, Kind, and Loving to lost Sinners, than the Father, and so it would have tended to Eclipse his Glory, and that not only in respect had unto his Goodness, but also in respect had unto his Sovereignty; for, it was at his Choice and Liberty, whether Sinners should be raised to this Honour and eternal Happiness, by being Espoused to his Son, or not: Therefore God the Father's Contrivance, and Acceptation of this so great and so amazing a Design of Favour and rich Bounty of his Son's Espousing of Sinners, confers *Validity* upon it, and removes all Objections out of the way, which perhaps, in some Sense, otherwise might have rose.

The Son ascribes the Glory to his Father. 2. This further appears, because the Son, in his Undertaking this Work, and Business, *i. e.* in coming into the World to Espouse Sinners to himself, is said to do it in Obedience to the Father; *The Lord God hath opened mine Ear, and I was not Rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my Back to the Smiter, and my Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair. -- Tho' he was a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the things he suffered.*

The Father chose the Bride for his Son. 3. It appears that the Father is the prime Agent and Author of this Marriage, and blessed Wedding Supper, because the Persons which the Son was to Espouse, were first Chosen, or Elected by him: This is mentioned in this Parable, *Many are called, but few are chosen*: And they were the Father's Choice; not but that they were the Son's Choice, as well as the Father's, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* The Son liked and approved of all them that his Father Chose for him, yet he never hath, doth, nor will Espouse one Soul, but such which the Father from Eternity Lov'd and Elected to eternal Life.

Eph. I. 3, 4. Brethren, It is observable, that Election is generally in the holy Scripture, attributed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places, in Christ, according as he hath Chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World.* So it is said in another place, *Whom he did foreknow, he also did Predestinate, to be confirmed to the Image of his Son.* The Apostle Peter witnesseth to the same Truth, *Elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father.* The Father Lo-

ved them from Everlasting, and therefore Elected them.

4. The Father is the first and chief Author of this Marriage Feast, appears, because he sent the Son into the World, on purpose to Espouse Sinners, or to bring them into a state of Marriage Union with himself, it was on this Errand the Son came; it was to Accomplish this gracious and glorious Design and Achievement, the Father sent him hither: *Last of all he sent his Son. I came not of my self, but my Father sent me.* It cannot quickly be reckon'd up how many times our blessed Lord (in the Gospel according to John) saith, the Father sent him; *The same Works that I do, bear Witness that the Father sent me.* Again, he saith, *This is the Will of him that sent me.* Again, it is said, *He that sent me, is with me.* And, as the Father sent him, so likewise, I say, it was to this end and purpose, *i. e.* to Espouse Sinners, to Betroth them unto himself for ever.

5. It further appears to be thus, because the Father also prepared him a Body, and this not only that he might be a fit Sacrifice to Redeem those he Loved, but also that he might be a suitable Person to Espouse Mankind, and Marry 'em for ever. *A Body hast thou prepared me.*

6. Moreover it was the Father which made the first Promise of his Son to our first Parents; *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's Head.* And this Promise in due time was made good: *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, &c.*

7. God the Father also prepared the Marriage Supper, it was he that made this Feast; it is he that is at the whole Charge of it; they are his Fatlings that are killed; it is his Lamb, and the best also of all his Flock in Heaven and in Earth; it is his Wine that he hath mingled, his Milk, and his Bread, *Behold I have prepared my Dinner, my Oxen, and Fatlings are killed, and all things are ready.*

Possibly (as I hinted) this may allude to those Sacrifices which were under the Law, which were Types of Christ, who is the Substance of all the Provision of which this Feast doth consist.

But more directly, It undoubtedly refers to that Provision which God hath made for the Marriage of this most Noble, and High-born Prince, the Lord Jesus Christ: So that Oxen and Fatlings, serve chiefly for Illustration sake, to set forth that great Bounty and noble Treatment, or Entertainment, all shall find that come to this Wedding, and Espouse Jesus Christ: It is called, *A Feast of fat things, full of Marrow; Wine on the Lees, well refined.*

8. The Father sent his Servants to Bid or Invite the Guests, he therefore must

The Father prepared the Body of Christ.

Heb. X. 5.

Gal. IV. 4.

God the Father is at the charge of this Wedding Supper.

Isa. XXV. 6.

must needs be the first and chiefest Author and Agent in promoting this Marriage, or the spiritual Union of Jesus Christ with Sinners; it is said, *Again he sent forth other Servants*, v. 4.

The Father gives the Bride in Marriage.
John VI. 36.
Joh XVII. 6.

What Giving doth Denote.

9. Moreover it is the Father that gives all those Persons unto his Son, which the Son doth Espouse. Our Lord saith, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.*

1. Giving unto Christ, may denote Election, and also, that Designation of the Persons to this end. Moreover,

2. It may also signify, the infusing of Grace, or the giving them a Heart to Believe, and to Receive him. And as the Father gives the Sinner to his Son, so also he gives his Son to the Sinner: He first gave Jesus Christ for us, and then he gives him unto us, as the Effects of his sovereign Love and Grace. *If thou knowest the Gift of God: What Gift is that? Certainly it is Jesus Christ, he is God's Gift, and the greatest, and most choicest Gift that ever was bestow'd upon the Children of Men; for, when God gives Christ, he gives Himself, and all things that are truly Good; All things are yours, Why so? The Answer is plain, viz. You are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

Joh. IV. 10.

John. VI. 44.

What is meant by the Father's Drawings

10. The Father is so much concern'd in making of this Marriage, that unless he draws the Sinner to Jesus Christ, or makes the Soul willing to accept and receive Christ, none can come; *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him.* Naturally the Will is Rebellious and Obstinate; there is an Averseness to Christ, and Enmity in the Mind against him, therefore the Father must by his Spirit remove that Averseness, and take away that Enmity. It doth not only denote a rational Drawing, by Arguments used in the Ministry of the Gospel; for, if this was that which is here meant, then it would follow, that it is not the Father, but his Ministers that draw the Sinner. Therefore this Drawing signifieth that divine Power that is put forth by Almighty God upon the Soul: Our Lord explains it himself in Verse 65. *Therefore said I unto you, no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. Except he give Power to Come, a Heart to Come, or rather Faith*

whereby the Soul must Receive him; and *Faith is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God.* Eph. II. 8

11. The Father manifests his great Love, and is the great Agent, and Author of this Grace, and high Priviledges, i. e. the Soul's Union with his Son, appears, in that the Servants which he sends on this Errand, as Spokesmen to persuade Sinners, are to offer this Favour to them in his Name; nay, they are to Intreat them, and Beseech them in his stead, *We pray you, as if God did beseech you by us.* 2 Cor. V. 20.

So much as to the First thing, which this Marriage Feast doth Denote, or Comprehend.

Secondly, This Feast, or this Marriage doth also denote or hold forth, the wonderful Love of Jesus Christ to lost Sinners, which I purpose to Open more largely under another Head.

This Marriage Feast holds forth the wonderful Love of Christ.

Thirdly, It also signifies and fully holds forth, the strange and marvellous Condescension of Jesus Christ, in that he, who is the eternal Son of God, even God over all, blessed for evermore, should become Man, or take our Nature into Union with his own Person, and to enter into a near and most intimate Union with such vile and base Creatures, as all Mankind naturally are.

Rom. IX. 4.

Fourthly, It moreover Comprehends, or doth Import, what a wonderful Opportunity is now in the Sinner's Hand, who have this Offer made to them, whereby they may be made Happy for ever. What a Match, Oh, Sinners! is here Provided for you, and Proposed to you? You may be Espoused and Married unto the Son of God, if you can be brought to leave and forsake all your former Lovers, with which you are in a League of too great Friendship.

This Marriage Feast shows, what an Opportunity is put in the Sinners hand.

Fifthly, From the subsequent Effects of the Whole, or from what Issues, it holds forth the horrible Evil and Ingratitude of Mankind. Did ever Mortals Slight and Contemn such a Favour, such Honour, such Happiness, as all those do, who refuse to come unto this Marriage.

It shews Mans horrid Ingratitude.

This shall Suffice as to the First thing Propounded, and it is all I shall say at this time.

S E R M O N III.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

DOCTRINE I.

Nov. 1st.
1696.

The great God, hath out of infinite Love and Mercy, sent his own Son to espouse poor Sinners, or to take them into Union with himself.

I Have shewed, What this Marriage doth Import, or Comprehend.

Secondly, I shall now proceed to prove and fully demonstrate, that it is the true and only Interest of every Sinner, to accept of this most gracious Offer, and Invitation to come to this Marriage Feast, and Espouse Jesus Christ.

1. It must be their chiefest, and only Concernment, and true Interest, by considering, how all Sinners, or ungodly Men and Women are blinded, misled, and like to be undone for ever, by means or reason of those Lovers which they have already Espoused, and are in League withall.

Brethren, Those Objects, or Lovers that they are insnared by, and are in love with, are principally Three :

1. *The Lusts of the Flesh.*
2. *The Lusts of the Eyes.*
3. *The Pride of Life.*

Sinners
are in
League
with Sin.

To which I might add, their own *Righteousness*; which although it be Comprehended in the Pride of Life, yet I shall speak unto it as a distinct and different Object of Man's Affections.

1. *The Lusts of the Flesh*, denotes the Object of all voluptuous Persons, and comprehends Gluttony, Drunkenness, Whoredom, or all Sensual Pleasures.

2. *The Lusts of the Eyes*, comprehends the Covetous Man's darling, or beloved as Riches, Gold, Silver, &c. This he Desires, and is never Satisfied with; yet this is the grand Idol of the World, that Object Mortals dote upon, and are Mad after.

3. *The Pride of Life*; this is the darling of all Ambitious Persons; their Hearts and Eye is set upon Pomp, and external Grandeur, they seek vain Applause, and the Glory of this World, which made our Lord say to this sort, *How can ye believe, that seek Honour one of another, and not that Honour that comes from God only?*

John 5.
44.

Under this darling Object (though with some difference) comes in the great Idol of all Pharisaical persons, viz. *Self Righteousness*, in which doth Consist

the Pride of Life, as much as in any other Respect whatsoever: What can more fully show the Pride of Man, than those cursed Conceptions of Deserving any thing at God's Hands, by our own Obedience? Notwithstanding, in our best and chiefest Duties, or acts of Piety, is much Sin, which, as it is a Breach of God's Law, it deserves Eternal Death and Wrath.

My Brethren, pray consider, that it is from these, or some of these beloved Objects, on which the Hearts of Men are set, that so few come to this Marriage Supper; they will not break off the League they have made with the *Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, to Espouse Jesus Christ.*

2. Moreover, know assuredly, that no Person can have any true Love to God, or unto Jesus Christ, whose Hearts are set upon any of these things. *Love not the World, neither the things of the World.* ^{15.} *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him, v. 15. For all that is in the World, the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but of the World, v. 16.*

1. That is, to Love things that are Sinful in themselves, or Sinful in their own Nature.

2. Or such who Love lawful Things and Objects to Excess, or Inordinately, setting their choicest and chiefest Affections upon them.

The Danger of Loving Sin, or any lawful Pleasure inordinately.

The first Comprehends all direct Acts of Sin, as Lying, Swearing, Whoring, Drunkenness, Stealing, Pride, Covetousness, Revenge, Envy, Malice, Deceit, Superstition, and Idolatry, or any other thing that is a Breach of the Law of God. It is one thing, my Brethren, to be Overcome by a Temptation, to commit this or that Sin, and another to love, like, and approve of it. Sin, in the Affections, is far worse than Sin in the Conversation; the former shews such are in the Gall of Bitterness, and not renewed by Divine Grace. The other only serves to demonstrate a Man is not perfect in Grace, or not without, Sin as in himself. *David, Job, Peter, and many others committed many acts of Sin; they had Sin in their Conversations, but they were not in love with Sin; they had it not in their Affections, Ye that love the Lord, hate Evil; that is, all Evil, Sin as it is Sin, and*

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the

the worst of all Plagues in the World. To have Sin in the Affections, is a clear sign of Unregeneracy. But then,

2. To Love lawful things and Objects inordinately. God allows People to love their Wives, their Husbands, their Children, their Parents, or any of their Relations, and Friends; but, if we love any of these to Excess, or Inordinately, or more than Christ, or God himself, we can be no Disciples of his, nor is the Love of God in such persons. Also God allows us to love our Food, our Meat and Drink, our Cloathes, our Trades, Riches, Houses, Lands, or any thing we have, or do possess, as it is a Blessing given to us of God, and Sanctified to our Good, we answering God's gracious End and Design in bestowing these things upon us. But, if we set our Hearts upon any of these things, and love them more than God, and Jesus Christ, *The love of God is not in us.* Men may make an Idol of their Backs, of their Bellies, of their Trade, of their Lands, of their Houses, lawful Pleasures, Silver and Gold; and it is this which renders their Condition to be Wretched, and Deplo-
rable.

3. Pray Consider, that it is by means of Sin, and by an inordinate Love to the Creature, that all Men and Women naturally are Blinded; these are their Gods, their Idols, and these things are the Objects by which they are in danger eternally to be Undone and Ruin'd.

4. Moreover, it is the great End and Design of God, by his making this Marriage Feast, or by proposing to the Soul, a Union with Jesus Christ, to break, and utterly to dissolve that League, and Friendship, Sinners have entred into with any of those things, of which we have mention'd.

Union
with
Christ is
held forth
by this
Marriage
Feast.

Sinners
great In-
terest to
cast off &
break the
League
with Sin.

And now, *That it is the Sinners great Concern, or true and only Interest,* to cast off, and break their former League with Sin, or what they have plac'd their Hearts their Love, and Affection upon, I shall Prove and Demonstrate by several Considerations.

1. Consider, that Sin is an Enemy to the Soul, and this World also, as it is the Object of Lusts; and not only Enemies, but very cruel and bloody Enemies.

2. Sin, in its Original, was but a Bruit of Satan; it is the Spawn of the Devil, and, like Father, like Child. Sin hath made a Breach between God and Man: God and Man were once in a state of true Friendship, until Sin set them one against another. Nay, Sin hath caused an irreconcilable Enmity between God and all Mankind; for, all Men, by Nature, are in this Condition: *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God; it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can*

What evil
Sin hath
done to
Man.

be; And, God is Angry with the Wicked every day. Such is his Holiness, and pure Nature, that he cannot but Hate him that Loves Sin: Hence it is said, *The Face of the Lord is set against them that do Evil, to cut their Remembrance from off the Earth.* Again it is said, *The Lord tryeth the Righteous, but the Wicked, and him that loveth Violence, his Soul hateth.*

Rom. 8. 7.
Psa. 7. 11.

Psal. 11. 5

3. Sin hath defaced the Image of God in Man, and hath brought him under God's Curse, and hath laid him Obnoxious to eternal Wrath. Now, if this be duly consider'd, is it not the true Interest of Sinners, or their chiefest Concernment, to break that League they have made with such an Object?

Is not the loss of God's Love and Favour, a fearful thing? Is it not dreadful to be fill'd with Enmity against God, and hate him? Saith the Lord, *My Soul loathed them, and their Soul also abhorred me,* Zech. 11. 8.

Is it not an amazing thing, and a dismal Loss, that instead of God's holy Image, man should bear the Image and Likeness of the Devil?

Is it not a lamentable thing, to be under God's vindictive Wrath, and to be laid Obnoxious unto eternal Burhings? Can any think of this, and not Tremble? Would any (unless they are utterly depriv'd of their Understanding) Hugg such a pretended Friend, that is such an Enemy to God, and to the Person that is in Love with it?

Secondly, Furthermore, pray Consider, That by this cursed Object of Sinners, they are become Traitors, and Rebels unto God, and abide so, as long as they keep this Friendship, and refuse to break the League they are in with Hell and Death.

Man an
Enemy to
God by
Sin.

It was (Beloved) hereby, that we cast off our blessed and rightful Sovereign, and set up the Devil in the Place, and Throne of God.

Thirdly, This Marriage with Jesus Christ, must needs be the Sinners true and chiefest Interest, considering yet a little further, what traitorous Lovers these cursed Objects are unto Sinners, Oh! what Barbarity have they exercis'd upon the precious Souls of Mankind.

1. Sin hath put out the Eyes of all Men, their Understanding naturally being utterly Darkned, and hence they see not, nor can they discern what a cruel Monster Sin is, which they hugg and imbrace in their Bosomes; they are in the Night of Darkness, and think they have got Rachel into their Bed, when, alas! it is one far more Deform'd than blear-ey'd Leah; nay, one worse than the Devil; for so is Sin in many respects, as hath formerly been Open'd unto you.

The Eyes
Sinners
put out
by Sin.

Also

Also by this means they cannot see, nor discern the Beauty and Loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ. I say, they are Blind, and in Darkness, their spiritual Eyes being put out by Sin, which they love, and will not forego, leave, nor forsake.

See Blind leaders of the Blind.

See the Parable of the Man that fell among Thieves.

2. Moreover, Sin hath poisoned and corrupted, not only one Faculty of the Soul, but also every Faculty thereof.

3. These Enemies, that are the Darlings of Sinners, have Wounded them from the Crown of their Heads, to the Soles of their Feet; so that they have nothing but Wounds, and Bruises, and putrifying Sores, Isa. 1. 5.

4. Sin hath cover'd the Soul all over with a Leprosy: No doubt but the Plague of the Leprosy, is a Figure and Representation of Sin; we read, such was the nature of it, that it spread it self all over the Body. So hath Sin spread it self all over every part, and Faculty of the Soul; and every Member of the Body of Sinners, are Corrupted by it also. *Their Eyes are full of Idolatry, their Hands swift to shed Blood, the Throat is a filthy Sepulchre, under their Lips, is the Poyson of Asps.* The Leprosy was a most loathsome, filthy, and stinking Disease; Sin renders the Soul hateful and abominable in the Sight of God, and in every Man's own Sight, whose Eyes are inlighten'd. No Disease was more Contagious or Infectious; it infected the House, Walls, Vessels, and Garments, where the Leper dwelt. So all things are infected by the Sin of an ungodly Person, even his very Prayers are Sin. What Mortal would imbrace such an Object, that hath given him such a foul and filthy Disease? Certainly it must needs be the Wisdom of every Soul, to cast off such a Lover with the utmost Hatred and Abhorrence.

Sin binds Sinners in Bonds, and also to a dead Body

Rom. 7. 24.

5. Sin hath laid all Mankind naturally in Chains, and cruel Fetters; they are bound in Bonds of Iniquity, yea, in such Bonds that bind them, unto a filthy dead Body, a rotten, stinking Body. Natural Pravity or original Corruption, is so compared by the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* Or, this dead Body. Moreover, these Bonds bind all that Guilt that is in Sinners, upon their Souls and Consciences; and not only so, but it also binds them unto the Devil, to be his Slaves and Vassals.

And, in the last place, these Bonds bind the Soul of every Sinner that is in Love with it, over to eternal Wrath and Vengeance, yea, unto everlasting Burning.

6. Sin hath also Stabb'd the Souls of all that are in a League of Love and

Friendship with it, it has given the Soul it's mortal Wound. Oh, what is the Blindness and Folly of such Sinners! they sport and play with Sin, and imbrace it, as a man imbraces a lovely Object, and think nothing more sweet and pleasant, and yet every Kiss they give Sin, I mean every act of Sin, is a Stab at the Heart, as if a Spear was thrust into the very Bowels of a person.

Sin hath stab'd Sinners at their Hearts.

Sin, and this World, with which wicked Men and Women are in Love, is set forth by an adulterous Woman, by wise Solomon, Prov. 7. 11, 12. Who lyes in wait for a foolish young Man; *And behold, there met him a Woman, with the Attire of an Harlot, and subtile of Heart.* ver. 10. And thus she said unto him, *I have Perfumed my Bed with Myrrh, Aloes, and Cinnamon, come, let us take our fill of Love until morning.* -- *He goeth after her straightway, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or, as a Fool to the correction of the Stocks,* v. 22. *Till a Dart strike through his Liver, as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not it is for his Life.*

Though this is true in the Letter, i. e. This is the Folly and Danger of every one that commits Adultery with a Woman; yet, no doubt, it is as true of every other Sin. All that love this World, or are in love with any Sin, thus they are Wounded; every Sin is a Dart that pierces the Soul.

The Way Sin leads the Soul in, and the dismal End it will bring all Sinners unto, may sufficiently serve to Convince every one who is in love with it that it is the greatest concern to break that League they are in with it, and to espouse Jesus Christ. As Sin lays every Sinner under God's Wrath here, so it will bring them to Hell in the end. The Wages, Reward, or Demerit of Sin, is Death, eternal Death. This will be the End of all those who continue in Sin, or that live in the love and liking of it: *Her house is the way to Hell, leading down to the Chambers of Death,* Prov. 7. 27.

Now, the Design of God (I told you) in making this Marriage Feast, is to bring Sinners to be willing to break that Contract, which they have made with these Objects, which certainly, all must needs conclude, is their Wisdom to do, considering what hath been said.

Neither is there any other way to escape the Misery, and fearful Danger they are in hereby, but by their accepting this gracious Invitation, viz. To Espouse Jesus Christ, which is by Eating this Supper, or by Feeding on Christ by Faith; for to Believe, to Receive Christ, or to Feed on him, signifies the very same thing.

This, my Brethren, is the first Demonstration, to Prove, That it is the true Interest,

Interest, and highest Concernment of Sinners thus to do.

U S E.

1. We Infer from hence, *That greater Love and Mercy to Sinners, could not be shewed unto them, than God hath manifested in making this blessed Marriage Supper.*

God saw what a fearful Condition Mankind was in, by the Love of Sin, and by the inordinate Love of the Creature, they having not ever Tasted of any thing which is truly Good, he has provided such a Feast, which if they do come and Eat thereof, they will soon perceive how they have been Deceiv'd, and Blinded by the Enemies of their Souls

Exhortation.

Let me therefore now Exhort You that are yet in your Sins, or live in Love with them.

1. To Consider *What your woful State and Condition is.* This indeed may be Lamented. Though these things are so, and it is day by day Open'd, and made clearly to appear to be so; yet Sinners will not Believe it, or at least-

wife lay it to Heart. They cannot be persuaded, that this is their Condition, which is a full Confirmation of the Truth you have now heard, *That all ungodly Men and Women are Blind.* If these things do not Affect your Souls, if you Believe not, this is your Condition, certainly you are in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity.

2. Let me Exhort you to Cast off Sin, and the Love of this World. Had you rather Dye, than Live? Is Sin so Sweet to you, that you are Contented to be Damn'd, for your Love to it? Do you think it hath more Good and Sweetness in it, than is to be found in God, and in Jesus Christ? Will you shew yourselves to be some of them *that make light of this Marriage Feast*, and, *one go to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise?* Oh! if it be so, hear what God says, *None of these shall taste of my Dinner.* No, not so much as one Taste of God's Love. No Christ then, shall you have when you come to Dye. No Pardon of Sin; no Peace of Conscience, but into everlasting Flames you must be cast.

So much at this time.

S E R M O N, IV.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son, &c.

THE Doctrine I am upon, is this, viz. *That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse and marry poor Sinners.*

1. You have heard, *What this Marriage doth import.*

2. I am upon the Second General Head proposed, viz. *That it is the true and only Interest of Sinners, to accept of this gracious Offer.*

I told you, I should endeavour to make this to appear by divers Demonstrations.

1. The First was taken from the Consideration of that woful Condition all Men are in, by means of that Affinity they have made with other Objects and Things.

That I have done with, and I shall now proceed.

Secondly, It is the Sinner's true and only Interest to Espouse Jesus Christ, considering the great Worth and Dignity of his Person and Offices.

2. From the great unworthiness, or indignity of those Persons, which he offers to Espouse unto himself.

1. From the Dignity, Worth, and glorious Excellency of Christ's Person and Offices:

1. He is a King, yea, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Jer. 10. 7. This respecteth his Office. But further, he is God, the Son of God, *The Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* He only hath the Keys of Hell and Death. He hath all Power in Heaven and Earth. His Glory excelleth the highest Heavens: Nay, in Comparison of him, the Sun that is so Glorious, is but a lump of Darkness, or without Light. 'Tis he, whose Power is such, *that he measureth the Heavens with a span. And all the regions of the Earth, are as the small Dust of the Ballance in comparison of him.*

Brethren, If we consider him in his Personal Excellencies, or in the Glory of his Offices, there is none like unto him in Heaven, nor Earth; there is not such another; He hath the Pre-eminence over all Creatures, Angels and Men, yea, over all the whole Creation. All must Worship him, do him Homage, or give divine Adoration to him. The Father, when he brought him into the World, said,

The Excellency of Christ's Person.

said, *And let all the Angels of Heaven worship him,* Heb. 1. 6.

The Glory of Christ's Majesty cannot be Conceived, much less Expressed by any in Heaven and Earth.

And, is it not (think you) the chief Interest, and only Concernment of Sinners, to Espouse him, who is Exalted in Heaven at the Father's Right Hand, having taken the full Possession of his Kingdom above, and will quickly take unto him the actual Possession of his Kingdom below? *His Dominions shall be from Sea to Sea, and from the Rivers, to the ends of the Earth* Psalm. 72. 8. All Nations shall Serve him, and Kings shall lick the Dust of his Feet, and Bow before him: His Sceptre is a right Sceptre, he doth what he pleaseth, and none can lay unto him, What dost thou?

2. He is Glorious in his Retinue, having *Ten thousand times ten thousand of glorious Angels, to minister unto him.* What are the Attendance of the greatest Monarch on Earth to those mighty Ones that attend upon Jesus Christ? The least of them far excel in Power and Glory, the chiefest King, or Potentate on Earth.

There are Three or Four Things that further tends to Demonstrate his Favour, in vouchsafing such a high Privilege, and great Honour in his Espousing poor Sinners.

Christ's
Alisuffici-
ency.

1. Let us Consider, his Alisufficiency, he hath all things in the Compass of his own Being, whereby he is infinitely Happy and Glorious in himself. Moreover, his Glory and Happiness had been nothing less than it is, if Mankind had never been Created, (he being God over all, blessed for ever) nor would his Glory be less, (as so consider'd) if all Men should be Consum'd, and come to Nothing.

Charnock.

He stands in no more need of us, (as One observes) to add unto his Essential Glory, than the Heavens stand in need of a Moth to move it, or the Earth a Grasshopper to uphold it; or the Sun a Glo-worm, to add to its Light and Lustre.

Brethren, If the Lord Jesus Christ could not have been Happy without his Espousing and Marrying Sinners, it would not have been so great a Wonder: But since he can Gain nothing by us, and stands in no Need of us, in his proposing this so great, so sweet, and gracious an Offer this tends to show his admirable and amazing Condescension, and that it must needs be the chief Interest of Sinners to accept him, it being our Good only, which he hereby seeks, and labours to effect.

Christ's
Independ-
ency.

2ly. Considering his Independency: Christ is, Brethren, so free, and absolute

in his Being, and Actings, that nothing can necessitate him to regard us; none could lay any Ingagement upon him, to set his Heart upon Mankind. If any person could Oblige him, or if we could Deserve any such thing at his Hands, or could present any Motive which might effectually Persuade him, then it might not be so much admir'd: but alas! there is no Desert, no Merit, no Motive in any Sinner, either from within, or from without, to stir him up to Love and Espouse any Man or Woman of Adam's Offspring. Alas! can Boils and Botches allure; or loathsome Filth and Ugliness intice admirable Beauty, to Love and Delight?

3. Consider the Nature of Christ's Sovereignty, in respect had to his Choice.

Christ's
Sovereign-
ty.

1. He might, without the least Prejudice to himself, have annihilated Mankind, as soon as he had Created them. Before they had Sinned, might he not have done what he would with his own, (as Reverend Charnock notes) much more might he have done this? After man had Sinned, and cast him off, might he not have Executed the fearful Sentence of eternal Death and Wrath immediately, and so have caused the Glory of Man to fly away as a Bird from the Birth, from the Womb, or Conception, and so have crushed the Cockatrice in the Egg? And this he might have done unto the Glory of his Justice.

2. Or, might he not have display'd the Glory of his absolute, Sovereign Grace and Favour (saith he) to the fallen Angels, and not to fallen Mankind? Or, have made us Devils; or, at least, have put us into the like State they are in?

Brethren, The Angels were his Creatures, and more Glorious too in their first Estate, than Man; and were, as to their Beings and Nature, more like unto him, they being Spirits, and so of a more pure and sublime Matter than Man, and so might seem a more fit and proper Match for him than Man, who was made of Dust, or red Clay: What Obligation, I say, lay either upon the Father or Son, to Spare Man, and not the Angels that Sinned?

3, Or, Why might he not have Decreed (saith he) from Everlasting (foreseeing Man's Fall, and horrid Rebellion) to have cast off all Adam's Posterity, and throw'd them into Hell, and have raised up a New Creation of Mankind, from a better Head, and have caused them to Stand, and have made them more desirable Objects of his Love and Affections?

Obj.] But some may say, *How then could the Attribute of his Mercy and Goodness been known?*

E e e e e

Ans.]

Answ.] Certainly (as he Observes) infinite Wisdom could some other way have display'd the Glory of that, and all other Attributes, if he had pleas'd; and in such a way, that he might have spared his own precious Son from pouring forth his Blood. No doubt but the whole Contrivance of the Mystery of our Redemption, results from God's Sovereign Pleasure.

4. Or why (saith he) might not the Plea of Divine Justice, have rather prevailed, than the Plea of Mercy? Was it not more Reasonable, that Justice should be Glorified in Man's final Ruin, than that Mercy should be heard for us, considering that nothing could Satisfy Divine Justice, for Man's Offence, as it seems to us, but the letting out of the precious Blood of his own Son; or that he must Dye, if we are Spared? To which I may add,

5. Or why doth our Lord Jesus commend his Love to Sinners in *England*, and not to Sinners in *India*? I mean to the *Pagan* World; They are wholly left under Darknefs, and never heard of Christ: They know nothing of his Death, nor of the Gospel; they have not this Offer of his Love, as yet, made unto them; they are not Bid to this Marriage Feast.

Rev. 3:
20.

6. Or, why doth he so Graciously vouchsafe this infinite Favour to us in and about this City, and some other places in this nation, and lets many Cities, Towns, and Corners of *England*, remain in great Darknefs, they having not such clear Gospel-Light afforded to them? Christ doth not come and stand at their Doors, and Knock, as he doth at your Doors, and hath for a long time.

Or, why doth he open some of our Hearts, causing us to attend upon the Word, and by the Powerful Operations of his Spirit, bow and subject our Rebelious *Wills* to Embrace him?

Whereas many are let alone in the Blindnefs of their Minds, and Hardnefs of their Hearts, who sit under the same Means of the external Preaching of the Gospel. Surely, no other Reason can be given of this, but his own Sovereignty. What greater Demonstrations of Sovereign Love and Grace, can Jesus Christ shew unto us?

Thirdly, It greatly Concerns Sinners to accept of this Offer, or it must needs be their chief and only Interest so to do, considering, that great Indignity and Unworthiness of the Persons, to whom he commendeth his Love.

The Sin-
ners great
Unwor-
thiness.

Quest.] Who are they?

Answ.] I answer, They are Men and Women, Children of lost *Adam*; not Angels, but Mankind.

And, Oh! what a low, base, and contemptible Creature is Man! *What is Job 7. man, that thou shouldst magnify him, that 17, 18. thou shouldst set thy Heart upon him? And that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?*

Man, a Worm, a base and Vile Creature, a meer Carrion Worm, bred out of Corruption, not worth the least regard! Do we Value a Worm? Oh, why should Christ, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, set his Heart upon, and Court such a Creature!

And, shall not such Creatures think it doth not greatly Concern them, to accept him? Is it not their chief Interest to bid him Welcome, and open the Door to him, and readily come to this Marriage Supper?

Sirs! If Men were now Poor, yet if they were of an high Birth, or Sons of Nobles, there might seem to be some Motive why Christ should make this wonderful Suit and Offer to them: But, alas! alas! all were base Born, Born Children of Wrath: Our Father left us Beggars. But, this is not all, he left us Sinners. Man is a Sinner, a Rebel, a cursed Traytor to this blessed Prince. Shall the King, that we have Conspired against, and Contemned in our Hearts, and consulted with the Devil to Dethrone, to Murther, and tread under Foot, come to us, to Woo us? Hath he fallen in Love with us? Or, doth the offended Sovereign stoop to offending Criminals? Stand, and wonder, O ye Heavens! Doth the Majesty of Heaven, in this manner, Condescend to Espouse a Slave of Sin, and Satan? Shall such that Hate him, be Belov'd by him? Shall Condemned Rebels be not only Intreated to accept of a Pardon, but also to Marry the Prince himself, and they not think it their only Interest to accept it? Oh, what an Inequality is here!

1. He a King, yea, the *King of kings*, and they Rebels and Traitors to him?

He the mighty Monarch of Heaven and Earth, and they Beggars!

He from Heaven, Heavenly; they from Earth, Earthly!

He the highest Sovereign, and we the lowest Peasants!

He the Darling of Heaven, and we the Vassals of Hell!

He, in his Nature, Pure, Holy, and Undeiled, and we, in our Nature, Impure, Filthy, and Polluted!

Fourthly, It must needs be their true Interest, considering what strange and amazing Atchievements he hath undertook, in order to bring about, and obtain his gracious Design and Purpose.

Christ's
wonder-
ful At-
chieve-
ments.

1. Consider what a glorious Place, and rich Palace he left above, and to what

what a doleful Land of Darknes, he came unto, to seek the lost Soul he designed to Espouse. He came out of his Father's Bosome, to be exposed to the Wrath and Malice of Devils, and wicked Men.

2. He laid aside his glorious Robes to be cloathed (as I may say) with Rags, that so he might accomplish his gracious Purpose.

3. Consider what a long and vast Journey he undertook, to come to us, to offer his Love. Is it not a long way from Heaven to Earth?

Christ loved and Decreed to Espouse Sinners from all Eternity.

4. Consider, That he from Eternity decreed to Espouse all those Persons which his Father gave him; and whatsoever he doth in time, was but in pursuit of his unchangable Purpose from before all Time.

5. Consider, That he hath Espoused us Virtually before he offers his Love unto us: He Espoused us, when he Espoused our Nature; he Virtually was Married to Sinners, when he took the Nature of Man into Union with his own Divine Person. Calvin understood this chiefly to be meant by this *Marriage* in my Text. Indeed, had not the Father first Married his Son to the Nature of Man, he could not have Married the Person of any Man to him. Christ must be *Flesh of our Flesh, and Bone of our Bone*. God being a Spirit, he could not be a proper Spouse for us. Could an Angel be a fit, and proper Help-meet for *Adam*? We could not see him, could have no affecting *Idea* of him; we could not come near him: His Glory is so great, considered as he is God, it would have overwhelm'd us, or have dazzled our Eyes; therefore he veiled his Glory in our Nature, and became like unto us, that we might Behold him as an Object every way suitable, and agreeing to us, whom he came to Betroth to himself for ever.

Joh. 1. 14 *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.* How was this? Even as he was made *Flesh*, and dwelt among us. In this the Wisdom and Goodness of God was manifested. We could not so well conceive him, nor Worship him, because we could not tell how to frame any true or right *Idea* of him in our Minds, except he brought forth the Express Image of his Person.

Therefore, it is by him we come to God, Believe in the Father, Espouse the Father, Love, Honour, and Worship the Father.

" The Son of God (saith a Learned Man) was made *Flesh*, that he might be a true, and fit Bridegroom for his Church.

6. Consider what he hath Suffered and undergone, that he might have his gracious Design of Love accomplished.

What Indignities did he meet withal, in the Days of his Humiliation, from Men! His Birth was mean, being Born of a poor *Virgin*; the Popish Church calls her a *Lady*, and Paint her in very rich Robes; but, alas! as to her outward State in the World, she was no *Lady*, but a mean *Virgin*; which appears,

The great Abuse-ment of Christ.

(1.) By the Meanness of that Man whom she was Espous'd unto: *Joseph* was no *Lord*, no *Earl*, no *Duke*, but a poor *Carpenter*.

(2.) By that poor Entertainment she had in the *Inn*. Had she been of some noble, or high Descent, no doubt but the *Inn-keeper* would have made better Provision for her, she being big with Child, and near her Time. We may conclude, tho' the *Inn* might be full of Guests, yet some might have soon removed their Quarters, to have given place to a Person of such Quality, as these People imagine: However, they would not have turn'd her into the *Stable*, to be deliver'd of the *Holy Child Jesus*, among the brute Beasts.

2. No sooner was he Born, but he was laid in a Manger, and when the News of his Birth came to the Ears of *Herod*, he sought all manner of ways and means to take away his Life.

Moreover, the whole time of his Life was attended with Sorrow and Affliction. He was Hated, and Persecuted from place to place: He spent his Days in Grief, and Sighing. He is said to be *A man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*. How was he Reproached and Despised of Men, called *A Wine bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*: Nay, that he had a Devil and was Mad; and that he cast out Devils by *Belzebub, the Prince of Devils*. Oh, what Mortal can read these things, and his Soul not mourn, and his Heart pour forth!

Isa. 3.

Moreover, how basely was he Betraid by one of his own Disciples? And, what Sorrow did he meet with in his Soul in the Garden, in his bloody Agony, when the Weight of our Sins, and that Wrath that was due to Sinners, lay so heavy upon him? and besides all this, what a fore, ignominious, and painful Death did he Dye?

Christ's bloody Agony.

He Died in the stead, or room of all those the Father gave unto him. He could not obtain his Desire, viz. the Espousing and Marrying of our Souls, unless he Dyed for us: In his Holy Life he wrought out a Wedding Garment for us, and for all that Espouse him: And, by his Death, he bore our Sins, and Curse of the Law, or all that vindictive Wrath that was due to us,

The end of Christ's Death.

and

and so Saved us from Hell, and eternal Vengeance, whose Doing and Suffering, is our Righteousness, to our Justification, before God.

And, shall any after this, refuse to come to this Wedding, or to accept of his Love, and be Betrothed to so dear a Saviour?

Oh, ponder these things well in your Minds, and lay your Hands upon your Hearts, and delay no longer, but close with Jesus Christ this day.

Fifthly, But if all these Arguments and Demonstrations do not, will not prevail with you, to consider the Nature of his precious Love.

I. Jesus Christ had an early Love to poor Sinners. He loved us long before we were Born, or had a Being: *The Lord appeared unto me of Old, saying, yea I have loved thee with an everlasting Love.*

The great Love of Christ appeared.
Jer. 31. 3.

It was, my Brethren, a Love of choice, he chose us, and set his Heart upon us from all Eternity. It was a Love of Purpose, of good Will; he designed to Redeem us, to Visit us, and to Espouse us, to come and Knock at our Doors, and to change our Hearts, and to Marry us to himself for ever.

Oh! what Good-Will was here to Sinners? What a Purpose of Love, of Kindness, of Favour, and Grace? Did Christ chuse Sinners so long ago, even from Everlasting, and, shall not Sinners now Chuse him, Love Him, Espouse him? *We love him, because he first loved us.* Our Love to Christ, is not the Cause of his Love to us, but it is the Effect of his Love. His Love is the Fountain, our Love is a small Rivulet, flowing from that Fountain.

1 John 4. 19.

What is it, my Brethren, which draws out the Love of a Person to an earthly Object, or cause such a one to look upon it their Concern, and Interest to return Love for Love, more than the thoughts of the length of that time he Loved her, perhaps from a Child; but, Oh! how much longer did Jesus Christ Love us! It was not only from the Womb, but from Eternity. But pray do not mistake me, I do not say, the Cases run parallel; it is not the bare Reflection on Christ's early Love, that is sufficient to cause us to Love him: No, no, but his Love to us, hath a Physical Cause in it; 'tis like Love-Powder, it operates on us, as the Sun by its near approach in the Spring, causes the Grass to grow, and Flowers to put forth. Christ's Love to us, hath the same Effect on us, as the Sun hath, by shining on the Moon, *i. e.* the Sun shines on the Moon, and the Moon reflects great Light on the Earth.

II. Christ's Love is a free Love; it

arose from himself. Pray consider the Objects he doth so dearly Love.

Brethren, the Lord Christ did not let out his redeeming Love to us, as we stood in the First Adam, in the state of Innocency, but as we were Fallen, and lay Polluted in our Filth and Blood. Perfect Man stood in no need of redeeming Love, Mercy and Compassion: God, consider'd as Creator, was our Husband, and we wanted no Saviour to Espouse us; I may say, it was in our Widowhood that Christ loved us, God having cast us off, and given us a Bill of Divorce. *Now, Ezek. 16. when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, I said unto thee, When thou wast in thy Blood, Live, &c. I looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the time of Love, and covered thy Nakedness: Yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.*

Oh, what was the Motive of Christ's Love! It is beyond our reach to find it out. It is a Free Love, an Undeserved Love. There was nothing he could behold in us, to cause him to Love us: Nay, it is evident, he might see cause to Loathe and Hate us, but see no cause arising from us, to move him to Love us. He Loved us when Sinners, and Enemies, and when we lay under the Curse, and condemned Criminals. *I will Love them freely, Hos. 14. 4.*

III. Christ's Love, is Infinite, or Unmeasurable; it passeth all Understanding. *That you may know the Love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.* It's beyond the Knowledge of Men or Angels. Christ's Love hath all Dimensions in it; *There is an Height, Breadth, Length and Depth in it.* We may as soon find out God to Perfection, as find out the Love of Christ to Perfection: *It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? Longer than the Earth, Broader than the Sea.* So it may be said of the Love of Jesus Christ; the inmost Recesses, or Secrets of his Heart cannot be known.

Christ's Love is infinite.
Eph. 3. 19.

IV. The Love of Jesus Christ is Wonderful. As his Name is Wonderful, so is his Nature, and the greatness of his Love. Doubtless, his Love unto Sinners, makes the Holy Angels behold him with Admiration. His Love is wonderful, if we Consider,

Christ's Love wonderful.

1. The Rise, Original, and the Spring of it, is wonderful, it being without Beginning from Everlasting.

2. If we Consider the Motive of it, it is wonderful. Who ever Loved thus? Love such, with such a Love, that Hated him, and were so Odious and Ugly in themselves!

3. His

3. His Love is wonderful, if we consider the Effects of it :

1. In respect had to himself, what did his Love put him to do, and to undergo for those he Loved ? What strange Effects had it upon his Holy Person ? How did it seem to Disrobe him ? How Poor did it make him, that was so Rich ? How Contemptible and Despised, that was so Great, High, and Honourable ? How low did it bring him, that was so Exalted ? How Miserable to all humane Sight did he become, that was so Blessed and Happy. He that was Blessedness it self, was, by his Love, made a Curse for us. In a Word, his Love made him who was God, to become Man : He that was the Glory of Heaven, to bear the Pangs of Hell : That was the Light of the World, to come under the greatest Darknes : That was the Life of all Creatures, to come under the Power of Death.

The Effects of Christ's Love on Sinners.

2. Christ's Love is wonderful, in respect had to the Effects of his Love on Sinners.

1. It causeth them that Hated him, to Love him above Father and Mother, Husband or Wife, Son or Daughter, House, Land, or a Man's own Life.

2. It causeth poor Sinners to Love him, after this manner whom they never saw : Is not this wonderful ? O what amazing Effects has it upon the Souls of Sinners : *Whom having not seen ye Love, in whom though now ye see him not, ye Rejoyce with Joy Unspeakable, and full of Glory.*

1 Pet. 1. 8.

3. Christ's Love hath a like wonderful Effect upon the Souls of Sinners, that *Elijah's Garment* had, which he cast upon *Elisha* : *So he departed thence, and found Elisha the Son of Shaphat, who was Ploughing with Twelve Yoke of Oxen before him, and he with the Twelfth, and Elijah passed by him, and cast his Mantle upon him : And he left the Oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, Kiss my Father and my Mother, and then I will follow thee ; and he said unto him, Go back, what have I done to thee ? No sooner doth Christ cast the Mantle of his Love on poor Sinners, but immediately the Soul leaves all, and follows him : No Man that hath had the least saving Sight of Christ, and hath Tasted of his Love, but runs after him.*

1 King.

19. 19, 20.

Christ's Love wonderful.

4. Such are the wonderful Effects of Christ's Love, on the Souls of Sinners, that it makes a strange and marvellous Change upon them : It transforms their Souls into his own Image. Do but behold Christ, though it be but in a Glass, and this will be the Effects of it ; *But we all with open Face beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

1 Cor. 3.

18.

Christ's Love ravishing.

V. Christ's Love is of a sweet, and soul-ravishing Nature ; it is compared to

Wine ; nay, better than Wine ; *Let him Kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth, for thy Love is better than Wine.* There's no Believer but finds by Experience, that the Love of Christ is sweeter than all things in this World, when he gives them fresh Tastes of it ; this made the Spouse to cry out, *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am Sick of Love.* O how sweet is such a Sickness ; happy they that are Love-sick to Jesus Christ !

Cant. 1. 2.

Cant. 2. 5.

VI. The Love of Christ is a conjugal Love ; nothing will satisfy him but the nearest Relation ; it is the espousing the Soul unto himself that he designs and aims at, that he may manifest his most dearest Embrace, the most sweetest Intimacy, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in Righteousness, and in Judgment, and in Loving-kindness, and in Mercy : I will betroth thee unto me in Faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.*

Hof. 2. 19.

Brethren, If Jesus Christ shewed such Love to his Enemies, nay unto his Murderers, as to pray for them, *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do ;* O, then, what is his Love unto his Spouse ! unto all those that he takes into Union with himself !

VII. The Love of Jesus Christ is of an attracting Nature ; it is an attracting, a Love attracting Love ; it constrains all that taste of it to Love, delight in, and follow him ; *The Love of Christ, saith the Apostle, constraineth us :* It constrains the Soul that feels its Effects, to leave all Sin ; to loath and hate Sin as the greatest Evil ; it constrains the Soul to hate that which once it loved, and to love that which once it hated ; *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.* It draws the Soul out of Darkness into marvellous Light ; it draws powerfully ; let who will strive to obstruct or hinder the Soul from closing with Christ, it will be in Vain, if it be but in the Cords and Bands of his Love, the Husband, the Wife, the Parents, the Children, may do what they can to persuade them to leave off following, and cleaving to Christ, yet a Believer is constrained to cleave to him : His Love is stronger than Death ; it draws the Soul to Holiness, to New-Obedience, to suffer Shame for Christ's sake ; nay, to Dye for him, rather than it will forsake him.

2 Cor. 5. 14.

VIII. Christ's Love is a Love of complacency ; he delights in that Soul that he has drawn to him, and that believeth in him : *As the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee :* This further appears, by what he says unto his Spouse, *Thou hast Ravished my Heart, my Sister my Spouse, thou hast Ravished*

ravished

F f f f f

Cant. 4. 9. *wished my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with the Chain of thy Neck.*

Oh, how is Christ delighted with the Eye of Faith, by which the Soul came to behold him, and which caus'd it to Love him, and Delight in him, it being that uniting Grace, through the Operations of the Holy Spirit; Faith on our part is the Band of this Union, tho' Christ apprehends us first by his Spirit, before we can apprehend him by Faith.

And from hence 'tis, that a Believer takes up such Complacency and Delight in Christ, such as is the Cause, will be the Effect, Christ being the Joy and Delight of the Soul.

IX. The Love of Jesus Christ is of a Commiserating Nature. 'Tis a Love of Sympathy. He hath such precious Love to all Believers, or to all that Espouse him, that he has a fellow-feeling of all their Sorrows, Troubles, and Afflictions; *In all their Afflictions he was Afflicted; and in his Love and Pity he Redeemed them, and carried them all the days of Old.* This Notes (saith our late Annotator) the Sympathy of Jesus Christ, he having the same Spirit in him that the Church hath; it being Christ who appeared to *Moses* in the Bush; he was that Angel of God's Presence, that led *Israel* through the Wilderness.

Brethren, our Lord Christ hath the same Love of Sympathy now, as he had in the days of old. *We have not an high-Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points Tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.*

Oh! who would not, but readily Espouse such a Person, Marry such a Prince, that will sit up with them all the Night of their Sickness, and Sorrows? He will bear them Company, his Left hand (of Power) shall be under their Heads, and his Right hand (of Love and Mercy) shall Imbrace them; he will bear them in his Arms, and carry them in his Bosome, and give them sweet Cordials, to revive, and chear their drooping and fainting Spirits, so that they shall never be without Help and Support, let their Wants be what they will: *Who can have Compassion on the Ignorant, and them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with Infirmities.* Though Christ had no Sin of his own, yet he was Afflicted, and was compassed with our Infirmities; he made our Infirmities his own, and bore our Sicknesses. O what a kind of Love is in our Lord Jesus Christ!

X. Christ's Love is an abiding Love, it is not *Hot* and *Cold*, as it is among men. O what a Heat of Love will some men shew to those they Espouse, and Marry at first! as if they were all Love,

full of burning Love and Affections; but alas, it doth not abide, it continues but a short time, they soon cool in their Affections; and indeed, so doth our Love to Jesus Christ, which may be for ever Lamented. We are too subject with the Church of *Ephesus*, to leave our first Love. Christ may say unto us, as he speaks unto his People of Old; *I remember thee, the kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me, in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown.* Rev. 2. 2.

We too often decay in our Love to Christ, as to the Degree of it. Our Love to him, and to his People, doth not always abide alike Strong, and Fervent, but Christ's Love to us, doth never decay; *Having loved his own that were in the World, he loved them unto the end.* Joh. 13. 1.

He Loves us not with a mutable, with a changeable, but with an abiding Love; *Much water cannot quench [his] Love, nor can the Floods drown it.* Cant. 8. 7.

XI. Christ's Love is an *inseparable* Love. No Enemy, no Infirmary, no Miscarriage in his People, can separate his Love from them: Ill persons sometimes cause some Men to withdraw their Love from their Wives; a small thing may separate their Love from their dearest Friends, but nothing can separate Christ's Love from Believers. *I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature can separate us from the Love of God, which is in Jesus Christ, our Lord.* Rom. 8. 39.

If such is the Effect of Christ's Love to us, what is the Nature of his Love in it self? the Cause is more Noble than the Effects. The height of Honour, and worldly Advancement; nor the depth of Disgrace, or worldly Abasement, shall separate our Love from him, nor his Love from us; Such is his Love to all those that are United to him.

Obj.] Some perhaps may say, *But Sin may separate us from his love.*

Ans.] I Answer, No; that cannot be, because he hath promised to Blot out all the Sins of his People, and will remember them, no more.

By Angels, no doubt, are meant the Fallen Angels; and if the Devils can by none of their Subtil Temptations, intice the Saints to Sin, so as to separate them from Christ's Love, or the Love of God in him, then besure Sin can never do it. That which Sin may do, the Devil may do. But the Devil cannot separate us from the Love of Christ: Therefore Sin cannot do it.

Besides,

Besides, nor any other *Creature*, or *Thing* : This includes all *Things*, and leaves nothing out ; no, not Sin it self.

XII. Christ's Love is an Eternal Love, it is like himself, as he is Eternal, so is his Love ; He is *the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever* ; and so is his Love to his Chosen ones : *For, the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.*

If Christ doth Espouse or Betroth them, that he doth Betroth for ever, if he be an eternal Husband, then his love will be Eternal ; but those he doth Espouse or Betroth unto himself, he doth Betroth for ever, to be an eternal Husband. *Ergo*, His Love will be for ever.

Application.

What do you say ? Is not the Consideration of Christ's Love, a Motive sufficient to Wooe your Souls, or to prevail with you to come to this *Marriage Supper*, to be the Bride of such a Bridegroom as Christ is ? Ask *Believers*, and they will tell you what the Nature of his Love is : One Taste of it fills the Soul with Joy ; and it sometimes

causes the Soul to say, as Christ does to his Spouse, *Turn away thine eyes, they have overcome me.*

Christ's Love makes every bitter thing sweet, and all hard things easy ; it turns the Valley of Tears into a Mount of Joy, nay, it brings Heaven into the Soul. Will you not Love this lovely Object, this precious Person ? Will you pour Contempt upon the Lord of Life and Glory, and Value him not so much as the Trash of this World, no, not above your Sensual Pleasures, and Brutish Lusts ?

Oh, then how just will your Damnation be ? *Sirs*, I am here this Day, to tell you, there is one in Love with you, What think you, *young Men and Women* ? Is not this Matter worthy your most serious Consideration ? Is there no way that can be used to Court your Souls into Christ's Imbraces ?

Shall not the Father's Beloved, the *Darling of Heaven*, be your Beloved ?

Shall not the Object of the Glorified Saints Affections, be the Object of your Affections ?

Oh ! do not cast away your Souls, you will repent your Refusal of this Offer one Day.

But so much at this time.

S E R M O N V.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

D O C T R I N E.

That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse poor Sinners.

THE Third Demonstration, to prove it, was taken from the great, and wonderful Love of Jesus Christ. To proceed,

Fourthly, Consider the great Riches of Jesus Christ. *Sirs* ! If there be a Proposal made to a Person of a Match, presently the Question is, *What has he, or has she* ? What Portion pray, or what is he worth, is he Rich ? Now, Brethren, though it be a base and fordid thing, for any Person to Marry chiefly for Riches, or to prefer the Portion above the Person, which many, alas ! now a Days do ; yet (here especially) it may be a Motive worthy enough ; considering though the first and chief Motive should be, the Excellency of Christ's *glorious Person*, and the

Nature and Greatness of his Love and Affections. But, however, know, O Sinner, That Jesus Christ is very Rich ; thou needst not fear thou shalt ever know Want, or know Poverty, if thou dost espouse him, ; hear what he says, *Riches and Honours are with me, yea durable Riches, and Righteousness.* I purpose to do

Prov. 8, 18.

Three things:

1. Shew, *Wherein Christ is Rich, or in what his Riches lye.*

2. Prove, *That he is very Rich.*

3. Shew you, *The Nature, or excellent Quality of his Riches.*

1: Christ is Rich in Goodness, or *despise not the Riches of his Goodness* : -- *The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord.* Brethren, *Greatness and Goodness* meet in Jesus Christ ; it is rare to find them to meet in Men ; but what is the Goodness that is in Men, to that Goodness which is in the Lord Christ : The Sea is not fuller of Water, than he is of Goodness. 'Tis not long since you heard several Sermons

Rom. 2. 4.

mons upon the Goodness of the Lord. *O how great is thy Goodness.* There is no Goodness in any Creature or Person, but Originally it proceeded from Jesus Christ; (considered as he is God) all External, Internal, and Eternal Goodness comes from him, as Water from a Fountain; also Divine-goodness is part of his Riches.

The Goodness in Men is soon gone, it often proves like the early Cloud, and
Psal. 52. 1. *Morning Dew: But the Goodness of the Lord endures for ever.*

Whatsoever is Good, or may be called Goodness, which Transcends, it is in Jesus Christ in great Abundance: All the excellent qualities of Goodness is in him; no Man is full of Goodness, of all sorts of divine and spiritual Goodness, but the Lord Christ is.

He is of a sympathizing, a gentle, a loving, a forbearing, a commiserating, and long-suffering Nature; and also ever so, he is never otherwise; he is never out of this sweet Frame and Temper; he is not Good by Fits, like some Men, who often fail in goodness; all their goodness seems soon Darkened and Eclipsed, by a disordered frame of Heart, through the Power of Corruption; but the goodness of Christ remains.

Christ rich in Wisdom.
Col. 2. 3. *2: Jesus Christ is Rich in Wisdom: He is not only wise, but hath great abundance of Wisdom in him: In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge: He Communicates of his wisdom, to make others wise; no Person that receives him, but he Imparts his wisdom unto:*

Christ rich in Grace.
Phil. 4. *3. Jesus Christ is rich in Grace. My God shall supply all your Need, according to the Riches of his Grace, in Glory, by Jesus Christ. All Grace is in him: We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. His Grace, Love, and Favour is Infinite; and of his Fulness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.*

Take Grace for Divine-favour, or for Gracious Habits, or Acts, Jesus Christ is full of both; and he must needs be so, who is the Fountain and Original of all Grace, and Gracious Habits.

Christ is rich in Mercy.
4. The Lord Christ is rich in Mercy; all kind of mercy is in him; goodness may be shewed to all sorts of Persons, but mercy refers to, or is let out to the Miserable; had Man never Fallen, God's Goodness had been manifested to him, but his Mercy only respects Man in his Fallen State, which is alone seen and made known in Jesus Christ, to undone Sinners: In Mercy he Pitied us, in Mercy he Redeemed us, and in his abundant Mercy he Renewed us, Sanctified and Pardoned us; he is rich in Mercy, full of Mercy, infinite in Mercy, Pity, and Compassion, to all that receive him.

5. Jesus Christ is rich in Glory, that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what is the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance. There are riches of Glory attending his Grace, let out to the Church Militant; but what the riches of his Glory is, which is let out and manifested unto the Church Triumphant, we cannot conceive of.

Secondly, I shall prove and demonstrate, That Jesus Christ is Rich, very Rich, admirable Rich.

1. The Lord Jesus must needs be very Rich, because he is the Father's Heir, nay, Heir of all things: All that the Father hath the Son hath, all is his, originally essentially his, considered as he is God. Moreover, All things are given unto him as he is Mediator, whether things in Heaven, or things on Earth; he is the Father's First-born, and he also
Christ is Rich, because he is the Father's heir
Heb. 1. 2. *whom the Father hath appointed Heir of all things; therefore the Inheritance must needs be his. Jesus knowing, that the Father hath given all things into his Hands.*

We that Preach the Gospel, are sent on such a Message to Sinners (though far more weighty and great) which Abraham's Servant was sent about to Laban's House, viz. to Recommend Isaac's Love to Rebecca. And he said, *I am Abram's Servant, and the Lord hath blessed my Master greatly, and he is become great, and hath given him Flocks and Herds, and Silver, and Gold, men-servants, maid-servants & Camels, and Asses, v. 36. And Sarah, my master's Wife, bare a Son to my master when she was Old, and unto him he hath given all that he hath, v. 37.*

Even so say we unto you, The great God who sent us, is a mighty King, the World is his, and the fulness thereof; All things in Heaven, and Earth; The Cattel upon a thousand Hills are his, and he has but one Eternal Son, and to him hath given all he hath; and this Son of his, is fallen in Love with you: Oh, is it thus, and do you think to Espouse him or not? What Answer shall I return to him that sent me?

2. But to Evince, and further prove Christ is very Rich, pray consider, that he hath all Kingdoms of the Earth given unto him, to dispose of, as he sees good. The Father hath given him the Heathen
Psal. 2. 8. *for his Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his Possession.*

Quest.] Hath Jesus Christ taken into his actual Possession, his Kingdom, or not?

Ans.] He hath the Possession of his more Spiritual Kingdom already, when he ascended on high, he took possession of that, and he Rules now, and has long over all in Heaven, Earth, and Hell: Angels, Men and Devils, are put into Subjection to him; they are all his Servants,

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vants, and at his Command. Moreover

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near.
Phil. 2.11.

2. He will now, very quickly, take Possession of all the Kingdoms of this World; and will in a very short time make the Haughty and Proud Monarchs of the Earth, know, that he is the only rightful King of Nations, as well as of Saints, and the only Potentate; and before whom they shall Bow, and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. Christ, Beloved, is not only the King of Saints, but King of Nations.

True, for a long time he has suffered such that are his Enemies, to Reign, and he sets up sometimes the vilest of Men, for Reasons best known to himself, but their time is now but very short, God will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he comes, whose right it is, and he will give it unto him.

Brethren! The Seventh Trumpet will be suddenly Sounded, and the Voice heard, saying, *The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.* It shall be known in due time, that our Lord Jesus is the true and rightful Heir of all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth. *The Kingdom, and the greatness of the Kingdoms under the whole Heavens, shall be given to the People of the Saints of the most high, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all Nations shall Serve and Obey him.*

See Mr.
Brooks's
Riches of
Christ.

3. Jesus Christ must needs be very Rich, considering the Greatness of his Family, which he provides for, both to Feed and Cloathe. It is, my Brethren, our Lord Jesus, who Feedeth every living Creature; the whole World is his Family, and, oh! how well doth he provide for them all? This before he could not do, was he not very Rich; *The Silver and the Gold is his, as well as the Wool and the Flax.* Could we but take a view of all the Men, Women, and Children, that are but in and about this City, no doubt but we should stand and Wonder at the Multitude of them, and also how they all should be Fed and Cloathed as they are; but what are the People of this one City, to all the People in this small Isle? And what a small Handful of People are in this Isle, unto all the People throughout the whole World? O what a Household, what a vast Family hath our blessed Lord? You would think that Man was wonderful Rich, who at his own proper Charge, did maintain every Day, (and so continually) Ten Thousand Persons, and to many of them too, doth give vast Incomes, it may be a Thousand Pounds a Week. But, alas! what would that be, to the Riches of Christ, who hath Millions of Millions, to provide for at his own Charge every Day, and that too perpetually; and to some of them he gives

Crowns and whole Kingdoms, cloathing Multitudes in Cloth of Gold and Silver; Doth not this tend to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is very Rich?

Moreover, Our Lord Jesus is Rich, doth appear; not only because all the Riches of the whole Earth is his; but also because all the Riches of Heaven are his. O what a rich Crown hath he above, and what a rich Throne doth he sit upon there! This is above our Apprehension; we cannot Conceive what the Nature of Heavenly Riches are; all Earthly Riches are but Shadows of the Riches of Heaven. What is Earthly Gold to the Gold that Paves the Streets of New Jerusalem. *The Streets of the City is pure Gold; also the Foundations of the City is laid with all manner of precious Stones.* He is so Rich, that if he please, he can Build many such Cities.

It is Jesus Christ that Communicates all the Riches of Grace unto his Saints; *We beheld his Glory as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth, - - - And of his Fulness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.*

What a multitude of Souls hath the Lord Jesus made Spiritually and Eternally Rich? Nay, he has enriched, not only particular Persons, but also many Churches.

Moreover, The Riches of Christ are so great, that he will in a short time, fill the whole Earth with the Riches of his Grace and Glory; *The Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

Certainly, every Sinner may have Encouragement from hence, to come to this Wedding, and Espouse this Rich Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. All that Christ Espouseth, he Inriches, and, what a Multitude hath he Married? There is not one of them, but he doth most Nobly provide for.

Sirs! Christ puts upon every particular Soul he Espouseth, a most rich and glorious Robe, far excelling the Gold of Ophir; and decks them with Pearl, and rich Diamonds, and Jewels. Nay, he sets a Crown, excelling Gold, upon the Heads of every one of them, and puts a Chain of Gold about their Necks.

Grace is a Crown, and thus all Believers are Crowned here in this World. But this is not all the Crown they shall have; for he hath provided a Crown of Glory for every one of them also: *Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* This was that Paul knew he should have, when he had finished his Course; *Henceforth there is laid up for me, a Crown of Life, which God the righteous Judge, will give unto me at that Day.* And not unto me only, but unto all them also, that love his Appearance.

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My

My Brethren, what Incouragement is here for Sinners, to Espouse the Lord Jesus ! O what Riches has he ! No doubt, but that there shall be many Millions of Men and Women Saved : For, although comparatively, there will be but a few, to the vast Multitude that shall be Damned, yet Heaven is a mighty Kingdom ; we see the Airey Sky, or outside of Heaven (if I may so say) but we cannot look into it, unless it be by Faith. We may perceive that the Earth is but a small Spot to Heaven, and no doubt but Heaven, like a great House, shall be well fill'd with Inhabitants ? Do you think any part or corner shall be empty, or want Inhabitants. It is not to be Conceived what a numberless Number shall be Saved.

And now, pray observe and mind it well, every particular Saint shall have a Crown of Glory set upon his Head : Christ will, I say, Crown every Soul that does Espouse him, though they are so vast a Multitude. Therefore certainly this doth fully tend to Demonstrate, that he is very Rich. So much as to the Second Thing.

Thirdly, I shall shew you, *The Nature, or excellent Quality of the Riches of Jesus Christ.*

1. The chiefest of Christ's Riches are Spiritual, not only such that enrich the Body but they enrich the Soul also. His Riches are Soul Riches, Spiritual Riches. The Men of this World have part of Christ's external Riches ; he gives these to such that Hate him, to such that have their Portion in this Life ; but their Souls are Cloathed with Rags ; they, in respect of their inward Man, or their better Part, are *Miserable, Naked, Poor, Wretched and Blind.* It is to be feared most of those, who have the most of Worldly Riches, (who are richly Cloathen, and Adorned in the outward Man,) are, as to their Souls, most wretchedly Poor, and Miserable. Certainly, those who are most Beautiful, and Pride it in themselves, and are so Haughty and Proud, that they know not well how to set their Feet upon the Ground, have most Loathsome and Filthy Souls. Did they but see their inward parts, or, how it is with them, in a Spiritual Sense, they would be Ashamed, and Abhor themselves.

Christ's Riches incorruptible.
Mat. 6, 19.

2. The Riches of Christ are incorruptible Riches. Earthly Riches are of a low, base, and corruptible Nature : Lay up for yourselves Treasure in Heaven, where Moth and Rust cannot corrupt, nor Thieves break through and Steal. The Apostle James bids those wicked Rich Men he Wrote to, to Weep and Howl, for the Misery that will come upon them : *Your Gold and Silver is Cankered, and the Rust*

of it shall be a Witness against you ; you have heaped up Treasure against the last Day. Jam. 5. 3.

But Christ's spiritual Riches are of a better Nature ; they will never Canker, nor Corrupt. What is that Treasure worth, that Rusteth and is Corrupted in a short time, or may be Cankered or Eat up, and spoiled by Moths.

3. The Riches of Jesus Christ are Incomparable ; there is no Earthly Treasure can be compared with it. It may be said of Christ's Riches which Solomon speaks of Wisdom, (which doubtless, refers to Christ himself, the Wisdom of God) *The Merchandise of it is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, and all things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto it.* Prov. 3. 14.

Christ's Riches are incomparable.

Certainly that must be of an excellent Nature, that nothing can compare with it. Christ's Riches as far excell all earthly Riches, as the Heavens excell the Earth, or Light Darkness.

4. The Riches of Christ are *Inexhaustible*, they cannot be spent ; his Treasury can never be drawn dry. It is like a Well, that hath a mighty Spring in the bottom of it. Thus it is not with any Earthly Treasure : Let a Man have the greatest Heap, or Mine of Gold or Silver, that ever any had, yet it may be wasted, and at the last, by continual drawing out, be all spent. Suppose you could get a Vessel which might hold ten Thousand Hogsheads of Wine, yet draw out of it every day, it would soon be all gone.

Christ's Riches are inexhaustible.

But it is otherwise here : Some Wells are always full, though Thousands draw Water plentifully, every Day, because a Spring feeds it. So is this ; a multitude have been Inrich'd with the Riches of Christ, since the first opening of his Store-house, upon the Fall of our First Parents, in that gracious Promise of the Seed of the Woman ; but yet he hath still the same measure, or quantity of Riches he ever had. He is not one Farthing Poorer than he was, the first Day he gave forth of his Riches, or divine Treasures unto Sinners.

5. Christ's Riches are *Soul-satisfying* Riches. *He that coveteth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver, &c.* If a Man get Ten Thousand Pounds, he may be no more Satisfied, than when he had not more than a Thousand Shillings. Earthly Riches and Honours are Unsatisfying. As Alexander the Great, who Conquered all the Eastern World, was as much unsatisfied after all his Victories, as he was before ; so it is in respect of the Riches of this World, they Satisfy not ; this is that Curse and Plague, which attends the Rich Men of the Earth, the more

Christ's Riches Soul-satisfying. Eccl. 5. 10.

more they have, the more they Covet : But the Riches of Christ are of a Satisfying Nature ; *He that drinketh of the Water that I shall give him, shall Thirst no more. But the Water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up unto everlasting Life.* Thirsting not again, denotes that full Satisfaction, and Soul Content, such find in the Riches of Grace ; they never found any solid Peace and Satisfaction before, but still their Souls were in a craving, and unsatisfied Condition, by reason they fought for Satisfaction in those things, were it was not to be had. *Solomon saith, that a good man shall be satisfied from himself : Not from any Self-sufficiency he finds in him, but from that true Peace, Riches, and Content he has received from Jesus Christ : One Penny of Christ's heavenly Treasure, doth afford far more Satisfaction, than Millions of Gold can administer to a Carnal Heart : In the fulness of his Sufficiency, his Soul is in straits.*

Job 20. 22. Christ's Riches are unsearchable. Eph. 3. 8. 6. The Riches of Jesus Christ, are unsearchable Riches. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should Preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of Christ.*

There is, Brethren, no Bottom of Christ's Treasure : As no Man can by searching, find God out to Perfection, so no Man, nor Angel, can find out the Riches of Christ to Perfection ; neither as to the Quality nor Quantity of them. You may as soon Sound the bottom of the deepest Sea, as find out the Bottom of Christ's rich Treasure of Grace, Wisdom, Knowledge, Glory, &c. No Man knows, nor can know, how Rich Jesus Christ is ; nor how Rich that Soul is, who hath an Interest in him, or is United to him.

Christ's Riches or his Money passes for current Coin in Heaven, and is of such a nature, that it will Satisfy divine Justice. They do not only Satisfy the Soul of Man, but the Justice of God also. Brethren, no Money, no Silver, nor Gold can pay our Debts, nor save us out of the eternal Prison of Hell. No, no ; it must be Christ's Gold, his Treasure, his Riches, his Righteousness, alone. If a Man had a Thousand Millions of Gold, he could not pay the smallest Debt he oweth to the Law, and Justice of God. O how excellent are the Riches of Christ ! For, he hath paid such a Sum, that has made a full Satisfaction for all the Debts of God's Elect ; and yet one of them Ow'd not less than Ten Thousand Talents. Oh, what a vast Sum hath Christ paid ! Every Sin is more (comparatively) than Ten Thousand Pounds ; for, Ten Thousand Millions could not Satisfy for the smallest Sin ; and yet none of us, but may say with David, *Our Sins are more*

than the Hairs of our Heads. Now, doth Psal. 40. not this tend to Demonstrate, that Jesus Christ is mighty Rich, and that his Riches are of a most Excellent nature ; that his Riches are unsearchable ; they Save the Soul from Hell ; *Other Riches avail not in the Day of Wrath :* But Christ's Riches will ; his Righteousness delivers from Death, i. e. from eternal Death, He that obtains but the least Dram of Christ's Riches, of Christ's Gold, tryed in the Fire, his Soul is saved from Hell. What are the Riches of Christ, but his Righteousness, and the Grace of his Spirit.

7. The Riches of Jesus Christ are Harmless Riches. They will not insnare nor hurt any Soul that obtains them : Earthly Riches Poyson, and Destroy oftentimes the Possessor of them. Many one day will lament that they had such Store of worldly Riches, so much Gold and Silver, because it Captivated and Insnared their Souls.

Sirs ! Riches in the Hand doth no man Hurt, but it too often gets into the Heart ; they set their Hearts upon it, and love it more than Jesus Christ, and all his divine Riches. What was it which made the Young-man reject Jesus Christ, and go away Sorrowful ? Was it not his inordinate Love to his external Riches ? the Text saith, *He went away sorrowful, for he had great Possessions.* It was not his great Possessions, but that undue love he had to them, that undid him : Therefore our Saviour said, that *A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven :* Nay, that a Camel may as easily go through the eye of a Needle, as a rich Man enter into the Kingdom of God.

Was it not love to the Riches of this World, that caused Demas to turn away from Christ, or apostatize from the Truth.

This also made Paul to give that Counsel to Timothy ; *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they trust not in uncertain Riches, but in the living God.* And, in the same Chapter, he saith, *But they that will be rich, fall into temptations, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown men in Destruction and Perdition.*

If Men have Riches, and no Heart to do Good with them, they are certainly Hurtful to them ; nay, they are of a Damning nature to such.

But no Man was ever Hurt by having Christ's Spiritual Riches. You need not fear any Snare here, for the more you have of Christ's Riches, of Grace, the more Secure you are, from Snares and Temptations.

If any are Hurt or Insnared, it is for want of these divine Riches, because they

Christ's Riches are harmless Riches.

Mat. 10. 23.

1 Tim. 6. 17.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Mat. 18. 24.

they have no Grace, no Faith, or but a small measure thereof.

8. The Riches of Christ are *Certain Riches* : Other Riches are *Uncertain*, they take themselves *Wings*, and fly away. A Man may with *Job* be rich to day, and poor to-morrow ; but what says our Saviour ? *Durable Riches, and Righteousness are with me.* No man can carry any of the Riches of this World out of it with him, *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out.* But if we have the Riches of Christ, or are enrich'd with his spiritual Riches, we shall carry them out of the World with us. We shall carry a Christ, Pardon of Sin, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, out of the World with us ; and although we shall then come to the end of our Faith ; Faith will be turn'd into Vision, and Hope into Fruition, yet Love, that blessed Grace, will abide with us for ever ; we shall carry that into another World : Nay, Sirs, at Death we shall partake of greater Riches, than we had whilst we were here. We shall then be possessed with the riches of Glory, which far exceed the riches of Grace.

Men, nor Devils, can rob us of these Riches ; Fire can't Consume them, nor Moths nor Rust Corrupt them : They lye in a safe Hand, Christ is our Trustee, in him, all our Spiritual Riches are laid up, he is Lord Treasurer. Could the Devil pluck Christ out of Heaven, we might lose our Riches ; but, alas ! that you will all say, is impossible, and as impossible it is, for the Devil to deprive us of our Soul-riches ; for, as *our Life is hid with Christ in God, so also are our Riches.* God intrusted the First *Adam* with all his Riches in his own Hand, and he soon run out All ; therefore he hath made a better Covenant with the Second *Adam*, and in him, with all his Elect, Christ is our Surety ; he hath Ingaged to the Father, for all that are given to him, and he therefore keeps all our Riches in his own Hand, and gives us out of his Ful-

ness, according to our present Wants, and this Secures all our Riches. Can the Wife want any thing, whilst all Fullness, all inconceivable Riches are in her Husbands possession for ever ?

9. *Lastly*, The Riches of Christ are *Eternal* ; they are *everlasting riches*. Once Spiritually Rich, for Ever Rich. The Crown of Glory is an Everlasting Crown, it is a Crown that *fadeth not away*. Also, 'tis called, an *incorruptible Crown*, and a Crown of Life, *eternal Life*. The Saints Riches shall continue to the Days of Eternity ; they shall last as long as God and Christ lasteth. God is their Portion, Christ is their Riches, and therefore their Riches are Eternal.

U S E.

From hence I Infer, That it must needs be the true, and only Interest of poor Sinners, to Espouse Jesus Christ. What Mortal but would accept of such an Offer, considering how Rich he is ? Poverty hinders many a Match, the Person is liked, but the Portion is not Sufficient ; but here is no room upon this respect, for any to Object against the Espousing of Jesus Christ.

Sinners, if you Marry him, all is yours, all his Riches are yours, and yours for Ever. Christ requires nothing with you, no, though you are far in Debt, though you Owe Ten Thousand Tallents, he hath enough to pay all : Nay, that very Moment you Believe in him, Close with him, you shall have a Discharge of all your Debts, and be Enriched with vast and inconceivable Riches.

What say you now, will you come to this Wedding, and Eat of the King's Supper ? Will you accept of Christ ? He only does but ask, and desire your free Assent, and Consent, Will you Embrace him, Accept him for your All ? Shall he become the Object of your Affections ? What do you say ? What Answer must I return to the great King, which sent me to you ?

S E R M O N VI.

MATTH. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

D O C T R I N E.

That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse poor Sinners.

January
10. 1697.

THE Head of Discourse I am upon, is this, viz. *That it is the greatest Concernment, Wisdom, and true Interest of Sinners, to accept of, receive, and Espouse Jesus Christ.*

This I have laboured to Prove by several Demonstrations. The last time I was upon this Subject, I spoke of the Riches of Christ. We will proceed to another Argument to Win your Affections to Jesus Christ, if it may be done, and it shall be taken from the Consideration of Christ's admirable and astonishing Beauty.

First,

Christ's great, and admirable beauty.
 First, Though Beauty, nor the Portion should be the chief Motives for any to Marry, but the Consideration of the Vertue, and excellent Qualities of the Person, yet admirable Beauty doth wonderfully take with some; tho among Men 'tis great Vanity and Folly; for as Solomon says, *Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain.* It often proves a great Snare and Temptation to Mortals, and Ruins many a Man and Woman. Besides, how soon may the fairest Face, or the greatest earthly Beauty be marr'd? A Disease incident to Mortals, quickly turns human Beauty into Deformity; but so it is not here, Christ's Beauty insnares no Person.

Prov. 31.
30.

*How do fond Youths, whose foolish Breasts
 (do beat
 With pleasing Raptures, and Love's generous
 (Heat;
 And Virgins kind, from whose unguarded
 (Eyes,
 Passion oft steals their Hearts by fond sur-
 (prize,
 Feed their strange wand'ring Fancies by the
 (Eye,
 'Till treacherous Beauty spoils them utterly?
 (Cover'd with Wit) black Venome in they
 (take
 (And 'midst gay Flowers, hag) a vip'rous
 (Snake.
 Here's no such Danger, but all Pure and
 (Chaste,
 A Love by Angels fit to be imbrac'd!
 A Love, 'bove that of Women, Beauty such,
 That none can be Enamour'd on too much.
 Reader, then Read, and learn to Love by
 (this,
 Until thy Soul can sing, Raptur'd in Bliss,
 My Well-beloved's mine, and I am his.*

None ever saw Christ his beauty but fell in Love with him.
 But that I may proceed, Consider, That never any ever saw the Beauty of Jesus Christ, but presently fell in Love with him. I do not mean, any that saw his Person in the days of his Humiliation, but all those that ever had a true Sight of him by Faith, (tho' I am not of his Opinion, who very lately affirmed) that the Lord Jesus was not in his Person Beautiful, but rather Deformed, thereby sadly abusing that Text, *He hath no Form nor Comeliness, and when we see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire him.* This, no doubt refers to that low, mean, and sorrowful State he was in, in the days of his Flesh, under his Sufferings and Humiliation; not that he was a Deformed Person: I am persuaded, by what I have read, and for some other Reasons, that our blessed Saviour was a most Lovely and Amiable Personage; yet many that so saw him, fell not in Love with him, but contrariwise, *Hated both him and his Father.* But I speak of a true, Spiritual

Isa. 53. 2.

Sight of Christ, and of his Personal Excellencies by an Eye of Faith.

Secondly, Jesus Christ, my Brethren, is the Original and Fountain of all Beauty.

I. He is the Original and Fountain of all Natural Beauty.

Christ is the Fountain and Original of all natural beauty.

1. Of that wonderful and amazing Beauty that is in the Sun, Moon, and Stars. How Glorious is the created Sun in the Firmament of Heaven? What Eyes can behold him, and not be dazzled? Why, Sirs, Jesus Christ is the Original and Fountain of this glorious Beauty; for, consider'd as he is God, he made the Sun, Moon, and Stars, they proceed from him.

2. Christ Jesus is the Original and Fountain of that glorious Beauty that is in the blessed Angels of Light. No doubt but their Beauty is too great for us Mortals to behold; I mean, as they are in their own native Glory. True, we read that some of the Saints saw Angels, but they certainly did appear in some other Form, and not in their own Angelical Form; they commonly appeared in the likeness of Men, and so they veiled their Glory, and native Spiritual Beauty: Can fleshly Eyes see Spirits?

3. Jesus Christ is the Original and Fountain of that Beauty that is in Men and Women. We read in Sacred History, of Persons that were exceeding Fair and Beautiful; as Moses, and David, who was Ruddy, and of a Beautiful Countenance; and of Absalom, of whom it is Written, *In all Israel there was none to be so praised as Absalom, for his Beauty,* 2 Sam. 14. 25. *from the Sole of his Foot, even to the Crown of his Head, there was no blemish in him.*

Moreover, Josephus reports of one, that all that saw him, were amazed and inamour'd with his Beauty. Also, in other Histories we read of some Women, that were so Beautiful, that they seemed more like Angels, than mortal Creatures.

Of all the parts of humane Creatures, the Face hath the greatest Glory and Beauty in it. Now, whatsoever Beauty was, or is in any Man or Woman, Jesus Christ was, and is the Fountain of it: All human Beauty is from him; he made the most Beautiful Face, that ever Eyes beheld; and, if such be the Work, what is the Beauty of the Workman? We judge of the Glory of the Creator, by the Beauty and Glory of the Creatures which he hath made.

4. That Beauty which is in the rarest Flower, is also from Christ. Tho' Man, by Art, may improve Nature, yet certainly there are such natural Flowers, that far exceed the Art of Man. Our Lord saith of some Lillies, *that Solomon in all his glory, was not array'd like one of them.*

H h h h h

5. Is

5. Is there any Beauty and Glory in Heaven? Oh, who can imagine what Beauty shines forth there! We see the Firmament of Heaven, that is but the out-side of Heaven; we cannot look within: Heaven is the Throne of God, Oh, what Beauty and Glory is in the Coelestial Paradise! Sirs! This all proceeded from Jesus Christ.

All Created Beauty is but a shadow of Christ's Beauty.

6. All created Beauty is, my Brethren, but a dark Shadow of the Beauty of Jesus Christ, or an Emblem of his Glory: For, as the Riches of this World, are but a Shadow of his Riches; and, as the Pleasures of this World, are but a Shadow of those Pleasures that are at God's Right Hand: So, all Created Beauty is but a Shadow of Christ's Beauty.

All Internal Beauty is from Christ.

II. All Internal, or Spiritual Beauty, is from Jesus Christ: He is the Original and Fountain of it. Beloved, As Heaven excels Earth, so Grace excels Nature. Sirs, The New Creature excels, for Beauty and Glory, all natural Beauty; What is the New Creature, but the Image of Christ stamp'd upon the Soul of Man? We are said to be

2 Cor. 3. 18.

Changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.

Could *Virtue* be Painted to the Life, (as one observes) or be drawn out by the *Pencil* of a cunning Artist, all that saw it would fall in Love with it, and be Inamour'd, nay Ravished to behold it; as on the other Hand, Could *Vice* or *Un godliness* be painted to the Life, it would appear the most odious and fulsome Sight, that ever Mortals beheld; it would be Loathed, Despised, and Contemned by all that saw it; they would turn their Eyes away, as from such Filth and Rot-tenness they never beheld before; and yet this is the deceived Sinners most beloved Darling: But to return, Little do Men think what the Internal Beauty of a Soul is, in whom the Image of Jesus Christ is Formed: But as the Image of a Person, though drawn exactly to the Life is not to be compared to the Person whose Image it is; so the Beauty and Glory of the *New-Creature*, is but a dark Representation of the Glory and Beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All eternal Beauty is from Christ.

Phil. 3. 21.

III. All Eternal Beauty, likewise, is from Jesus Christ; he is the Original and Fountain of it: Who is able to conceive of the Glory of the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect! Or, What the Beauty and Glory of the Saints Bodies will be, at the Resurrection-Day; when these vile Bodies of ours, shall be *Changed, and made like unto Christ's Glorious Body!*

We Read of the Beauty and Glory of *New-Jerusalem*, which I take to be an Emblem of the Saints future Glory it

is said, *To have the Glory of God, and her Light was like unto a Stone most Precious, even like a Jasper-stone, clear as Crystal.* *Rev. 21. 11*
And the Foundations of the City were garnished with all manner of Precious Stones. *18. 19.*
 Moreover, it is said, *The City was pure Gold, built and paved with pure Gold:* Now, all that Eternal Beauty, either of the Saints, or of that place where they shall be, proceeds from Jesus Christ: O, my Brethren, What then think you is Christ's most Glorious Beauty!

Thirdly, The Beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ's is *Inconceivable*, nay *Infinite*, far beyond Beauty is and above the Comprehension of Men inconceivable, or Angels; as his Love is *Inconceivable*, so is his Glory and admirable Beauty; no Heart can conceive it, nor Tongue express it: How do the Holy Angels; stand amazed, to see such Glory, such Beauty in a Man! *He was seen by Angels.* How? Seen by them? Why, he was seen with their highest Wonderment; that a Man, possessed with our Nature, who was made a little lower than they, should shine forth in such Beauty and Glory, above them!

Fourthly, The Beauty and Glory of the whole God-head, shines forth in our Christ's Lord Jesus Christ: As far as the Beauty Glory and Beauty is of the glorious Creator excels the Beauty of the Creature, so far the Beauty of the Christ excels the Beauty of any Created whole of the Thing; *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory God-head.* *Joh. 1. 14.*
of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. Is the Father Glorious, is there infinite Beauty in him; Brethren, Jesus Christ is a like Glorious; *Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, &c.* He is exactly like the Father, or his express Image; and the Beauty or Brightness of the Father, shines forth in him, that is, in the Man Christ Jesus; *For it pleased the Father, that in him all Fulness should dwell.* *Col. 1. 9.*

"O fair Sun, (saith one) fair Moon,
 "fair Stars, fair Flowers, fair Lillies,
 "but, O! Ten Thousand times Ten
 "Thousand, Fair Lord Jesus! I have
 "wronged him (saith he) in making this
 "Comparison; black Sun, black Moon,
 "black Stars, but, O! Fair Lord Jesus!
 "O! black Flowers, black Lillies, but,
 "O! Fair Lord Jesus Christ!

Fifthly, Christ's Beauty never *decayeth*, Christ's Beauty never de- it never fadeth; the Beauty of the Face Beauty never de- is soon gone, *Old-age* quickly causeth that to pass away; nay, Diseases, and inordinate Grief, soon spoils that Beauty; also, the Beauty of Flowers are gone in a Moment; yea, and the Glory and Beauty of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, shall pass away, but Christ's Beauty shall continue to all Eternity.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The Beauty of Jesus Christ is *Communicative*, he can, and doth transmit his Beauty, to all that Love him, or rather, to all that he Loves, and doth Espouse; no mortal Creature can do thus, they cannot Communicate, or Transmit their Beauty to others; but there is no Beauty, no Glory, no Comeliness in a Believer, but what they derive from the Lord Jesus Christ, *And thy Renown went forth among the Heathen; for it was perfect through my Comeliness, which I put upon thee, saith the Lord.*

Ezek. 16.
14.

Jesus Christ, Beloved, doth communicate a Two-fold Beauty to Believers.

1. The one he puts upon the Soul, the other he puts, or Works in the Soul, so that Christ makes Believers all Beautiful, both without and within; he puts upon the Soul his own Glorious Robe; that very Garment which he wrought out for us in our Nature, in the Days of his Flesh, which is all bespangled with precious Stones and Pearls, and Glitters far beyond the Richest Cloth of Gold; this is the Wedding-garment that is put upon all that come to this Marriage-feast, and Espouse Jesus Christ. This is a glorious Robe and in this Righteousness every Believer stands perfectly Justified before the Righteous and Holy God; so that, in this Respect, they are all Fair, and there is not one spot in them: And, my Brethren, that very Eye which apprehends the Lord Jesus, to the putting on of this Garment, is said to Ravish the Lord Jesus Christ; *Thou hast Ravished my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast Ravished my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with the Chain of thy Neck.*

Cant. 4. 9.

2. He also infuseth into the Soul Glorious Beauty, which is the Beauty of Sanctification; *The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her cloathing is wrought Gold; this makes the King to desire her Beauty:* But none of this Beauty is of, and from her self; it is no Natural, nor Artificial Beauty, but all conveyed, transmitted, or communicated to her, from Jesus Christ, in an extraordinary manner, by the Operations of the Spirit. All the Saints of God that ever lived, were as deformed, filthy, and odious, as any other Sinner, until Jesus Christ made them Beautiful and Comly, with his own Comeliness. He is made of God unto us, not only Righteousness, but Sanctification. &c.

Seventhly, The Beauty of the Lord Jesus is not only a Soul-transforming Beauty, but also a Soul-ravishing, a Soul-delighting, and a Soul-satisfying Beauty, *He is White and Ruddy, the chiefest among ten Thousand.* Making all that behold him, sick of Love to him; *He is fairer than the Children of Men; or, the Sons of*

Adam. Christ is not only Beautiful in one part, but he is altogether Lovely. Some Roses excel for Redness, and some Lillies for Whiteness; the Moon is Fair, and the Sun Clear and Bright; but the Rose, the Lilly, the Sun and the Moon, and the glorious Heavens, are all Black, when compared to the Lord Jesus: *I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy Likeness.* When I arrive to that perfect and compleat Beauty, and Glory, that is in Thee, and I shall never be Satisfied (as if David should say) until then. The Spiritual Beauty of Jesus Christ is of a Satisfying Nature: Natural, or Created Beauty cannot satisfy the Soul of Man; that cannot fill its Desires, but the Beauty of Christ doth this.

Psal. 17.
15.

Brethren, In a perfect Conformity to Christ's Beauty and Glory, lyes all the Happiness of true Believers, to which let me add,

Eighthly, The glorious God, and Father of Heaven and Earth, takes Delight in the Beauty of Jesus Christ, considered as God-Man in one Person, *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth.* Certainly, that Person, whose Beauty is the Delight of the ever-blessed God, must needs be a glorious Beauty: God takes no Delight in the Legs nor Face of a Man; but he takes Delight in the Beauty of his Son. The Personal Beauty and Perfections of Jesus Christ, is also the Delight of the holy Angels, they Love to behold him, and to look upon him.

God the Father takes delight in Christ's Beauty. Isa. 42. 1

My Brethren, If Heaven and Earth can make a glorious and compleat Beauty, than it is in Jesus Christ; for, the Perfections both of the Divine and Humane Nature meet in him. There can be no Addition to his Beauty, because it is perfect to the highest degree.

No Addition can be made to Christ's Beauty.

And now, you Sinners, what do you think? Is it not your Wisdom, your highest Concernment, to come to this Marriage Feast, to Espouse the Lord Jesus, to feed by Faith upon him, to Believe in him, and to be United to him, in Bonds of Love for ever; to have Christ to be your Husband, and to lye in his Arms, and to be fill'd and ravish'd with his Beauty, to all Eternity? But if the Consideration of his Beauty, will not move you, or prevail with you to fall in Love with him, I will try what another Argument will do.

Seventhly, Christ is Long-liv'd. Wou'd you Espouse and Marry a Person, that is Long-liv'd, so that you may be sure you shall not quickly be a Widow, then Christ is the Person, Oh! see that you choose him, espouse him, marry him. Methinks, I hear one say, that is deeply in Love with one that She Values as her own Life, nay, above her own Life; Oh,

Christ is a living, and an eternal Husband.

Christ's Beauty is a Soul-delighting Beauty. Cant. 5. 10
Psal. 45.
2.

I would not Marry him, if I was sure he was short-liv'd, or would Dye soon after we come together, for his Death would be as a Thousand Deaths to me. Love whosoever you will, and that too with never so strong and great Affections, none can insure his Life for one day; the Wedding-Week may be his Burying-Week, so far as you, or any body else knows, so Uncertain is the Life of Man. But, if you do Espouse, and Marry the Lord Jesus, he is long-liv'd, you shall never know Widow-hood. Long-liv'd, did I say? Oh, know he Lives for ever, and cannot Dye. Jesus Christ is an Immortal Husband; *I am He that was Dead, (that was well for us, we had Perished else) and am alive, and behold I*

Rev. i. 18. *Live for evermore, and have the Keys of Hell and Death.*

Obj.] I, but perhaps some may say, tho' Jesus Christ lives for ever, and he cannot Dye, yet such that Espouse him may quickly Dye; we see Believers Dye, as well as others.

Ans.] I Answer, if you will Espouse the Lord Jesus, you shall also *live for ever*. If you come and Eat of this Wedding Supper, you shall never Dye. *This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a Man may Eat, and not Dye.* Our Lord doth not mean a Temporal Death; no, God forbid; Who would live always in this miserable World? Death is one of the greatest Blessings to Believers. (as some of you lately heard) You that are Believers, cannot go to your Husband, you cannot go to Jesus Christ, until Death open the Door, and let you in unto him, *Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord.* This Job well knew, and therefore he said, *I would not Live always.* But know assuredly, that your Souls shall never dye the Second Death; you shall not Dye eternally; *Who so eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, shall have eternal Life.*

Nay, Sirs, Temporal Death shall not, cannot, separate these Lovers; Death cannot separate Jesus Christ, and that Soul which Espouseth and Marrieth him. Death cannot dissolve this blessed Marriage Union, both the Body and Soul of a Believer is United to Jesus Christ; they, when they Dye, dye in the Lord, that is, in Union with Jesus Christ.

Believers, Cheer up, your Husband hath the Keys of Hell and Death; he hath Power over Death and Hell, *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

Christ is a Living Husband, a Husband that never Dyes. What Comfort is here for you poor Widows, that have Espoused and Married Jesus Christ? What tho' your Earthly Husbands are Dead, and left you to the wide World,

exposed to a Thousand Sorrows, yet it matters not, your Heavenly Husband Lives for ever, he Dyes not.

And now to return to you, Sinners, Will you not Accept of this happy Match? Will you not Espouse such a King, he that is *the only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords*? A Prince of such Honour, of such Riches, of such Love, of such Beauty, and one that is Immortal, who Lives for ever, and that will make you Immortal, even save you from Death. Also, those that he Betrotheth unto himself, he doth Betroth for Ever. Certainly, this must be your chiefest Concernment, your highest Wisdom, and only Interest. Therefore do not Delay, but come to this Marriage-Feast, and Accept of Jesus Christ.

Ninthly, Consider, besides all that I have said unto you hitherto, *What a sweet Temper, and excellent Disposition Christ is of.*

This is a Thing which all that Marry, should well Mind. Some who are Wise, prefer the good Temper of the Person they are about to Marry, above all things: (Nay, one said, in my Hearing lately, That a good and sweet Natural Temper, was to be esteem'd, in the Case of Marriage, above a small measure of Grace in a crooked and peevish Nature and Disposition) The Truth is a little Grace is not sufficient in some Persons, to render them Lovely and Acceptable, in the Relation of Husband or Wife: Some Women, perhaps, who meet with Yoke-fellows, that are naturally of a sweet, mild, and gentle Disposition, tho' not truly Gracious, live better, and more comfortable Lives with them, than some others do, that are, in the main, Gracious Persons; tho' to their Shame it may be spoken, that they strive no more to Mortify their unruly and un-sanctified Passions and Affections.

But, what is any man's natural, sweet and good Temper, to the Spirit and Temper of the Lord Jesus Christ? I shall only hint of his excellent Temper in Four or Five Respects.

1. Jesus Christ is of a Compassionate Temper, of a Sympathizing Disposition. If thy Husband be never so Rich, or Great in the World, and tho' never so Comely, yet if he be not of a Compassionate and Sympathizing Disposition, thou may'st have no great Content, nor Happiness in that Relation. Certainly, those Men that cannot Sympathize, or have a Fellow-feeling of their Wives Afflictions and Sorrows, have but little Love to them. Now, the blessed Jesus is full of Compassion towards all his People. *In all their Afflictions, he was Afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them. In his Love, and in his Pity, he re-*

Heb. 4.
15.

deemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of Old. Oh, this shews that great Simpathy that is in Jesus Christ! What a Compassionate Disposition is he of? For, we have not an High-Priest, which cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Points tempted as we are, yet without Sin.

The Greek Word denotes (as one well Observes) such a Simpathy, or Fellow-feeling, as makes him like affected, as if he were in the same case with them.

'Tis said, *His Soul was grieved for Israel.* Ah, what a Sympathizing Disposition is Christ of; he Mourns, and Grieves over his poor afflicted ones; he Pities them, nay, he is Afflicted with them.

Luk. 23.
34.

Cant. 4. 7

II. He is of a Forgiving Temper. He is ready to Forgive his Enemies, *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do:* But much more is he ready to Pardon and Forgive the Sins of his beloved Ones, who are Married to him; he covers all the Infirmities of his Spouse; he will not see any Sin in her, *Behold thou art all Fair my Love, there is no Spot in thee.* He casteth his own Mantle over all our weaknesses, and infirmities, he is not like some who pretend to be his Disciples, yet reproach and vilify their faithful Friends and Brethren unjustly; they never learn'd of the Lord Jesus to cover all those Weaknesses which may be in such they Back-bite and Reproach: But this is because they see not the Beam that is in their own Eye. These sort are like curst *Cham*, and they would do well to read the 15th Psalm. But, O what a tender, charitable, and forgiving Temper is the blessed Jesus, even like unto his blessed Father, who passed by all the great Inormities of *David*, and said, *He was a Man after his own Heart*, save only in the case of *Uriah*; he took no notice of his other Infirmities, which were great. *Woman, be of good Cheer*, (said our Lord) *thy Sins are forgiven thee.* And thus he speaks unto all his People.

Cant. 5.
1.

III. Christ is of a generous, noble, and bountiful Temper, or Disposition: He is Kind, Charitable, and Liberal to all, but much more unto his Spouse; *He gives Liberally and Upbraideth not, Eat, O Friends, Drink, drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

1. His Bounty and Generosity would appear, should we Consider what it is he hath given, and doth give to all those he loveth.

2. If we Consider the manner of his Giving.

What
Christ
gives to
his people.

1. As to what he gives, or parteth with to them, he gives them all he is, or hath. He gave himself for them, to be a Sacrifice, to Dye, and bear the

Wrath of God in their stead. *Husbands love your Wives, even as Christ also loved Eph. 5. the Church, and gave himself for it; That he might Sanctify and Cleanse it, with the washing of Water, by the Word.*

Did ever any give thus? give himself to Dye, from that Love and rich Bounty he bare to such a One that he Lov'd. Christ hath *Loved us, and Washed us from our Sins in his own Blood.* Rev. 1. 5.

2. He gives them his *Flesh* to Eat, and his own *Blood* to Drink. Indeed, this is the Principle matter of which this Feast doth consist.

3. He gives them his Word, his Spirit, his Grace.

4. He gives them his own blessed Robe to Cloathe them; his Eye-salve to open their Eyes, his Gold tryed in the Fire, to enrich them.

5. He gives them his own Retinue, the holy Angels, to guard, preserve and protect them, and to Minister unto 'em, even to all them that he Espouseth, who are Heirs of Salvation. Moreover he hath promised to them a Kingdom, and a Crown of Glory, and that they shall sit with him on his Throne, and Judge the World with him.

2ly, As to the Manner of his Giving.

1. He Gives *freely*, all out of his own rich Bounty, and that to such that deserved nothing at his Hands, and who are not able to make him the least Recompence, for the smallest Favour.

If he gives any thing upon Exchange, see the manner of it; *To appoint them that Mourn in Sion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, and the Oyl of Joy for Mourning; the Garment of Praise, for the Spirit of Heaviness.* Isa. 61. 3.

2. His Rich Bounty is such, that he gives Seasonably, in the very time of Need; he will not miss that very season when we stand in the greatest want of Mercy and Grace, and also whatsoever we do need, to the full Supplying of all our Wants: *God shall help thee, and that right early.* He knows the best time, the very nick of time when to give unto us those things we need. He will not give it to us before, nor will he stay a Moment after that time; for, *the Lord shall Judge his People, and Repent him for his Servants, when he seeth their Power is gone, and there is none shut up, nor left.* Deut. 32. 36. He is of such a Noble and Beautiful Spirit, that *he gives Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Phil. 4. 19. Psal. 46. 5. Psal. 84. 11.

IV. Jesus Christ is of a humble, meek, and lowly Temper; or, of a wonderful Condescending Disposition. He sticks at nothing, thinks nothing too hard for him to do, which is for our Good, that he may bring us to God, and into Union with himself; *Who being in the Form of*

Phil 2. 6, of God, thought it not Robbery to be Equal with God, v. 6. But made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant; and being found in the Fashion as a Man, he Humbled himself, and became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.

Some will not bow nor yield to their dearest Friend, to do that which may expose them to the least Pain, Shame, and Sorrow, but Christ was Contented to do any thing, tho it was never so much to his Humiliation and Abasement, Distress and Sorrow, that he might obtain his desire, and work about the intended Marriage between himself, and his own Elect: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.*

Mat. 11.
28, 29.

Psal. 103.
14.

1 Cor. 10.
13.

V. He is of a Considerate Temper of Heart: He considereth and remembreth that we are but Dust. And that our Strength is not the Strength of Brasses, he will not therefore suffer us to be Tempted, above what we are able. He doth not expect more from his People, then he knows they are able to do, nor lay upon them such Burdens, which he knows they are not able to bear.

The Wisdom of Christ is infinite.

Tenthly, Jesus Christ is Wise. Some choose Wisdom, or a Man that is Wise and of great Understanding, before Riches, Honour, or Beauty. I heard some time since, of a Rich Man that had a Daughter to dispose of in Marriage, who, when he was ask'd, whether he would Marry her to a Wise Man, that was Poor and Low in the World, or to a very Rich Man that was a Fool: He replied, He would sooner Marry her to a Wise Man, tho he was Poor, &c. And certainly he shewed much Wisdom in so Answering.

Now, my Brethren, Jesus Christ is the very Wisdom of God; he is Wisdom it self, all true Wisdom is from him: He is Infinite in Wisdom, In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. He maketh others Wise, he doth and can Communicate of his Wisdom, to all such that he Espouses; nay, he maketh such that are Foolish, and without Understanding, wonderful Wise. Christ knoweth all things, he knows all the Father's Counsels and Decrees, which have been of Old, even from Everlasting; he shews us the Father, and openeth the deep things of God unto us. No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat. 11.
25.

No man knoweth the Essence of the Father, the Decrees, Counsels, and Designs of the Father, or hath a perfect Knowledge of the Father, but the Son only. All saving Knowledge of God is

in and through Jesus Christ; and he that hath a perfect Knowledge of God, (as he is in himself) must needs have a perfect Knowledge of all Men and Devils. He knows our State, our Spirits, our Frames, our Thoughts, our Ends our Aims, our Ways, our Wants, our Temptations, our Fears, our Dangers, and all our Desires are before him.

1. Christ knoweth the matter of our Desires, or what it is we Desire, chiefly Desire.

2. He knows the design and End of our Desires.

3. He knows the spring of our Desires, or from whence they Flow; whether from a Principle of Grace, or from Self-Love, Pride, and Ambition.

4. He knows the degrees or Extent of our Desires; whether Weak or Strong, Faint or Vigorous.

5. He also knows the cause of our Desires; whether they are caused through a true Sight of Sin, in its own evil Nature, and from a Spiritual and Gracious Sight of Christ's Personal Excellencies, that we Desire him, or only are occasioned from the Sight of the Damning nature of Sin, and a simple Desire of Happiness.

6. He knows the constancy of our Desires; whether they abide or no, or are only Temporary, Flitting, and continue no longer than we abide under God's Hand, or under the Rod of Afflictions.

7. He knows our Desires so as to observe them, Judge of them, Weigh them, or Ponder them:

Also, so as to answer all our good and holy Desires, and to punish us for all our unjust and inordinate Desires.

9. He knows whether our Desires after himself are accompanied with suitable Endeavours, or not.

If none of these things will move you to Love him and Accept of that Gracious Offer you have of him, and to look upon it to be your chiefest Interest to Espouse him, Then

Eleventhly, Consider, That he is always the same, he never Changeth. He is ever, or at all times of the same Temper, always alike Kind, Loving, Compassionate, Forgiving and Forgetting Wrongs and Injuries; he is not in and out, like changeable Men, that are in a good Temper one day, and in an ill one, and out of Frame at another. Oh, saith a Man, was my Wife always but in this good, gentle, and sweet Temper, as she is now in, how Happy would my Life be! And so on the other Hand, saith the Wife, was my Husband always alike Kind, alike Meek, Gentle, Loving, filled with Bowels, and Pity to me, being never Angry, Morose, Froward, or Peevish, no Wo-

Psal. 38.
9.
The Nature of Mens Desires Opened.

Psa. 27. 4

Christ always is the same.

Woman would live a better Life. But alas ! thus it is but with a few, such is the Corruptions of the Heart, the Passions, Temptations, Provocations, Mankind are expos'd unto, that they are often disorder'd in their Spirits, and out of frame ; they are not always of an even and sweet Disposition. But now, Jesus Christ, if once you do Espouse him, you shall find him *always* one and the same, *Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever --- He Changes not.* He is always the same in Power, in Love, in Mercy, and Goodness, in Faithfulness, in Pity, Sympathy, in Beauty and Riches. Some Men may be Rich when they Marry, but soon may wax Poor, by Losses, or badness of the Times, or by Carelessness and ill Husbandry, may waste their Treasure, and become Poor ; but the Lord Christ is ever in all things, as touching what he is in himself, and what he hath, the same. He is never Sick, no Disease, no Temptation is he liable unto.

U S E.

Oh, what is your Thoughts poor Sinners, now ! Will you come to this Marriage ? Will you let all your Old Lovers go, and get a Bill of Divorcement, and become Dead to Sin, to this World, and to the Law, and to all your own Righteousness, that you may be Married to Jesus Christ ? Say, Sinners, you have a good Match offer'd to you this day.

What do you say, Young-men and

Women, can't you find in your Hearts to Love Jesus Christ ? He is willing, if you are willing : Oh, Cry to him to make you willing ! He can draw you to Love him, you will never Love him, till he *sheds abroad his Love in your Hearts,* Rom. 5:5. by the Holy Ghost. Say, Oh ! Lord, Circumcize my Heart, that I may Love Thee.

This is the time, now, in the Days of your Youth, this Age he has chose. *I Prov. 8. Love them that Love me, and they that seek me early, shall find me.* Sure you may seek him, Is not this in your Power ? But, if you seek the World, seek your Pleasures, your earthly Profits, and Delights, above him, how can you be said to seek him ?

What do you say, that are Aged ? Is it not Time, more than Time for you, to Seek Jesus Christ ? He doth Espouse some Old Sinners ; he Calls some at the *Eleventh Hour.* I am come to Call you this Day to this *Marriage Feast* ; Will none of you accept of this High-born Prince, the *blessed Lord of Life, and Glory* ? Can you be so Foolish, and void of Understanding, to tell him, you cannot Love him, or do not Like him ? If so, then take what will follow.

Consolation.

But, Oh, Happy, happy Believers, What Joy and Comfort may this administer unto you ? O see what a blessed Choice you have made, and what a Friend, what a Husband you have got.

But so much at this Time.

S E R M O N VII.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

D O C T R I N E.

That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse poor Sinners.

Janu. 17.
1697.

1. **W**HAT this Marriage doth Import, we have shewed.

2. That it is the *great Concernment, Wisdom, and true Interest of Sinners, to accept of Jesus Christ ; Or, to come to this Marriage, and Eat of this Feast. i. e. Believe, or Feed by Faith on Christ.* This we have indeavour'd to make Appear, and to Demonstrate by many Arguments.

The last was taken from the Consideration, *That he is always the same, and Changeth not ;* neither in respect of his Glory, Riches, Power, Wisdom, Love, Beauty, or excellent Temper.

I shall now proceed to the next Demonstration propos'd.

Twelfthly, It is the greatest Concernment of Sinners to come and Eat of this Marriage Dinner, or Espouse Jesus Christ, from the Consideration of those *many glorious and blessed Effects, that attend or accompany the Soul's Marriage Union with Christ.*

I. Hereby he gives himself unto the Sinner. They thro' this Union have an absolute Interest in Jesus Christ ; he is the Soul's, and the Soul is his ; he is that Sinner's Friend, his Beloved, his Saviour Portion, Husband, &c. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Such a one may say, with *Thomas, My Lord, and my God.* I do not say, that every one that hath obtained this Union with Christ, hath the Faith of Assurance, or fully know, and are Confident, Christ is theirs ; No, a true Believer, thro' the weakness of his Faith, or by reason of Satan's Temptations, may have some Doubts and Fears about

Union with Christ gives the Soul an absolute Interest in him.

about it, yet, nevertheless, that Soul hath Christ, or a true and saving Interest in him, whether he knows it, or not.

Union with Christ is a full, a sweet, and near Union.

II. This Union is a *full* Union. As it is the Nearest and most Sweetest Union, so it is a most Full and Compleat Union. A whole Christ is United to the Sinner, and the whole of a Sinner, both Body and Soul is United to him, so that they become *both One*, in the nearest Relation, in a most wonderful and mystical manner.

1 Cor. 15. 3. 1 Pet. 3. 18.

1. The Whole Person of Christ is United to a Believer; not only United to his Human Nature, but also to his Divine Nature. This Word [Christ] doth not refer to his Human Nature, only, nor to his Divine Nature only, but to both Natures in his Person; neither of these Natures, distinct from each other, is Christ, tho sometimes his Humane is called Christ; as when it is said, *Christ dyed for our Sins*: Yet, in another place, it is Explained, [He] i. e. *Christ was put to Death in the Flesh*: His God-head could not Dye.

Joh. 6. 63.

Joh. 6. 53.

Moreover, sometimes by Christ is meant his Divine Nature. But now, I say, a Believer is United unto a Whole Christ, even unto the Divine, as well as to the Human Nature. And hence it is, by Virtue of this Union, the Dead Sinner is Quickened: The Flesh of Christ can Quicken no Person without his Spirit. *The Flesh profiteth not*. That is, the Human Nature, without the Divine; *It is the Spirit which Quickeneth*. The Human Nature profits not of it self alone, without being United to the Divine; yet the Human Nature, being Hypostatically United to the Divine Nature, so it doth Profit us; for, *Except ye Eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and Drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*. That is, except we Feed upon the Virtue of his Body broken, and his Blood poured forth, by Believing, we can have no Life in us.

Yet, it was impossible, that the Flesh of Christ could avail or profit us, had it not been United to the Divine Nature, because it was from the Worth, Dignity, and Virtue of his God-head, that the Sacrifices he offered, became Satisfactory to God's Justice. Yet, on the other hand, I may say, that without the Flesh of Christ, his Spirit, or God-head could not profit us, because the Justice of God required, that the same Nature of Man should perfectly keep the Law of God for us, and Suffer and Dye, or sustain that Penalty, or Punishment, which our Breach of it had expos'd us unto. And since a Whole Christ is United to a Believer, it follows from hence, That all that Good, that is in the God-head, is, and shall be Convey'd to us, so far as it

is Communicable; and, as the Humanity could not Communicate Grace and spiritual Blessings to us, so without that blessed Union of the God-head with the Man-hood, the Divinity is Incommunicable to us.

Therefore, saith a worthy Writer, "Although all Life, all Salvation floweth from the Fulness of the Deity, yet it is not Communicated to us, but by the Flesh of Christ. For, as the Deity is as a Fountain, whence all good things flow, (as) Life and Salvation, yet the Flesh, or Humanity, is as the Channel, by which all these good things, all Gifts, and Graces are derived unto us. Therefore, unless a Man apprehendeth this Channel, and be United to it, he cannot possibly be a Partaker of these Waters, which do flow from this Fountain.

2. Moreover, the whole of the Person of a Sinner, a Believing Sinner, both Soul and Body, is United to the Lord Jesus Christ; the Body, as well as the Soul is in Union with him. That which the *Second Person in the Trinity*, took into Union with himself, was not only our Human Flesh, but an Human Soul also, to assure us, that both our Bodies and Souls he would take into Union with himself.

Again, That which Christ Dyed for, Bought, and Redeemed by his Blood, that he doth take into Union with himself. But Christ Dyed both for the Bodies and Souls of his Elect. Therefore he taketh both Body and Soul into Union with himself. *Know ye not, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own. --- For ye are Bought with a Price, therefore Glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's.*

3dly, This Union is a strong Union Intensively, so that Christ and a Believer become one Spirit, *But he that is joynted to the Lord, is one Spirit.*

Not Essentially, but Mystically one Spirit. "One Spirit (saith a Reverend Writer) as if they were but one Soul in two Bodies. What the Spirit doth in Christ, it doth also in a Believer, according to the Capacity of his Soul, the same Spirit, which was the immediate Conveyor of Grace, to the Human Nature of Christ, is so to us. Christ had an Essential Holiness, in respect of his God-head, but a Derivative Holiness, as Man. And this Derivative Holiness proceeded from the Spirit in him, without Measure, which we have in our Measure. And by Virtue of this Union, by the same Spirit, whereby we become one Spirit with Christ; not only that Grace which is in us, and in our great Mediator, Christ Jesus, are of the same Nature

Charnock.

"Nature and Original, as the Light of
"the Sun, and the Light of the Stars, are
"the same, tho' they differ in Degrees,
"not Essentially: — 'Tis the same Spi-
"rit, in respect of Person, which makes
"Christ near of Kin to us. Thus a Be-
"liever is said to dwell in Christ, and
"Christ in him.

4. Moreover, it is an Union that is
Indissoluble; Sin, Hell, Devils, nor
Death, cannot break it; Believers Sleep
in Jesus, they *Die in the Lord*; that is, in
Union with him.

Charnock. III. Another Effect of this Union, is
Communion with Christ; Union cannot
be without Communion: *For (saith one)*
while the Members are United to a living
sound Head, there will be an Influx of Ani-
mal Spirits, whereby they shall partake of Life
and Motion; the Spirit from our Mystical
Head, will be working in us, providing for
us, and standing by us. Yet it is not al-
ways to the same Degree; our Commu-
nion with Christ, tho' it be constant, yet
it is not always so full and sweet. Now
part of this Communion appears in these
Things following:

1. Christ and a Believer walk together;
Enoch walked with God Three Hundred
Years, so long he had Communion with
God on Earth: O, what a high Privi-
ledge is this! to walk Hand in Hand with
Jesus Christ! to take sweet turns with
him in his Garden; Come, my Beloved,
let us go forth into the Field: — Let us get
up early to the Vineyards; let us see if the
Vine flourish, whether the tender Grapes ap-
pear, and the Pomegranates bud, and there
will I give thee my Loves.

2. They Lodge together; *Let us lodge*
in the Villages: My Beloved shall lye all
Night betwixt my Breasts, or in my Heart;
there Christ lyes, there he rests all Night,
or so long as the Night of Mortality
doth last; he doth not abide with the
Soul for a short Season, like a Traveller,
but he is a constant Dweller; and does
also manifest to the Soul, his most choi-
cest Love and Favour.

3. They sit together; the King sits at
the Table with his Beloved Consort, and
Dearest Spouse: *Whilst the King sitteth*
at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the
smell thereof.

4. They lye in each others Arms;
His Left-hand is under my Head, and his
Right-hand doth Embrace me.

5. They often Visit each other: Be-
lievers Visit Christ in ways of Duty, and
Christ Visits them in ways of Mercy.

6. They Sup together: *If any Man*
hears my Voice, and open the Door, I will
come in unto him, and will Sup with him,
and he with me.

7. They have one and the same Inte-
rest and Design, to carry on and manage
in the World; they have one and the
same Interest to carry on.

same Name; we are called by his Name,
as a Woman bears her Husband's Name;
I say, Christ and Christians are of the
same Name: He is called the Fairest a-
mongst Men, and she, that is his Spouse,
the Fairest among Women; nay, the
Church is called Christ, *so is Christ*; that
is Christ Mystical, i. e. the Church.

There is a Communication of all Christ
hath to the Soul, thro' this Union. *Tan-*
quam heres ex affeei, saith one; there's a
sweet Communication of all Christ's
Beauty, Goods, and Goodness, to the
Wife of his Bosome: Is it not a most
sweet and Blessed thing to dwell in the
same House, in the same place with Je-
sus Christ, to be possessed with the same
Spirit, partake of his Joys, and made
Wealthy with his Riches? *All is yours.*

IV. Another Effect of this Union, or
which doth accompany it, is Mutual De-
light and Complacency, in each other: *Mutual*
Delight of
Christ,
and Com-
placency
the Effect
of Union.
Prov. 5.
18. 19.
never did any Husband take so much
Delight in the Wife of his Youth, as
Christ takes in that Soul he Espouses:
Let thy Fountain be Blessed, and rejoyce
with the Wife of thy Youth: Let her be as
the loving Hind and pleasant Roe: Let her
Breasts satisfy thee at all times; be thou Ra-
vished with her Love. It is to be feared,
it is not thus with all Husbands; but
thus, and more abundantly, it is with
Christ: *As a Young-man Marrieth a Vir-*
gin, so shall thy Sons Marry thee; and as the
Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall
thy God rejoyce over thee. Christ's most
dear and intimate Love and Affections,
are placed upon, and run out to all true
Believers, to such a Degree, that he
breaks forth to this purpose; *Thou hast*
Ravished my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse,
thou hast Ravished my Heart with one of
thine Eyes, with the Chain of thy Neck.
Saints are called the Spouse of Christ;
Propter amoris Magnitudinem: Because
of that great and unparallel'd Love that
is between them.

The Joy of the Bridegroom is the
highest and sweetest that is found among
the Sons of Men: Hence Christ is pleas-
ed to express his Love by that of a Bride-
groom: Thou shalt be called *Hephzibath,*
for the Lord delighteth in thee: They are
the Joy and Delight of his Soul: *How*
fair and pleasant art thou, O Love, for De-
lights! How may such Expressions revive
our Spirits? But Read again, Turn away
thine Eyes from me, for they have overcome
me: But if this is not enough to affect
your Souls, in the Thoughts of the Gra-
cious Nature and Effects of this Union,
see what he says further; *The Lord thy*
God is in the midst of thee, he is Mighty,
he will rejoyce over thee with Joy, he will
rest in his Love, he will Joy over thee with
Singing.

V. Another Effect of this Union is a
full

full discharge of all the Sinners Debts: Let a Woman be never so much in Debt, no sooner is she Married, but all her Debts become her Husband's; none of them can be recovered of her, Demanded in Law of her, he must pay, and satisfy for all she Owes: She's in no danger of an Arrest, nor need she fear a Prison.

Brethren! until a Sinner Believes, and hath actual Union with Christ, he stands charged with a vast Debt; no Sinner owes less than Ten Thousand Talents.

See my Medium betwixt two Extreams.

None of the Elect are actually Pardoned, Justified before a vital Union with Christ proved.

Rom. 8. 1. Eph. 2. 2. 3.

Psal. 51. 5

Rom. 3. 19

Joh. 3. 18.

1 Joh. 5.

Rom. 3. 1.

Rom. 3. 28

Gal. 2. 16.

Act. 13. 39

Tho' we deny not, but that all God's Elect are decretively Justified and Pardoned from all Eternity; that is, God did Decree to pronounce every Elect Person in every Age, when they personally did exist, and had (or should obtain thro' the Spirit, a vital Union with Jesus Christ) actually and personally Acquitted, Pardoned, and pronounced Righteous Ones, and for ever freed from all Vindictive Wrath and Condemnation; but until such a vital Union be obtained, they, as well as the rest of Mankind, lye Dead in Sin, and are Children of Wrath by Nature as well as others. And this appears,

(1.) Because all the Elect fell in the first Adam, and by vertue of the Fall, were brought under the same Condemnation that their publick Head fell under.

(2.) Because all are Born in Sin, all come into the World with the same Stain, and Guilt of Sin; *Behold I was shapened in Iniquity, &c.*

(3.) Because it is positively said, *That the whole World became Guilty before God*; not only in their Consciences, but *fore Dei*, before God, and in his Sight, and in this respect Paul shews there was no Difference, the Sentence of the Law being charged upon the Elect by God himself, until they are in Jesus Christ.

(4.) And this further appears, because it is said, that *he that believeth not is condemned already*: Let him be who he will, *He that hath the Son hath Life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life*. Hath the Son, that is, Union with the Son, or is Married to the Son, *hath Life*; that is, both the Life of Justification, and the Life of Sanctification, and also Eternal Life in the Seed of it, and also hath a vital Principle in him that hath the Son, and that he that hath not the Son hath not Life, in either of these respects.

(5.) Because the Holy Ghost frequently ascribes our actual Justification only to Believers, or to Faith, tho' not to Faith either as a Habit or an Act, or that Faith is any of the Matter, or the Material Cause of our Justification; but only objectively, or in respect to Christ, whom Faith apprehends, *Being Justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, &c.* Therefore we conclude, that a Man is Justified by Faith, &c. Even we have Believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be Justified by the Faith of Christ, &c. Again, *In him all that Believe are Justified*; And where is said (in any place of Scripture) he is Justified that Believes not, (tho' not in his own Conscience) yet he is in the sight of God; (say they) and must not such then, who affirm that Elect Unbelievers are actually Justified, be look'd upon as Fomentors of an Error, and such which cannot tend any ways to the Glory of God.

(6.) None of the Elect are actually Pardoned nor Justified, before they obtain this Union with Christ; because Justification of our Persons make a relative Change, though not a real Change; it makes a change of the state of the Person, tho' not a change of his Heart; no, that is done by Regeneration, which always accompanies Justification; no Man is actually Justified that is not Renewed; he that was a Child of Wrath, is made a Child of God; *This thy Brother was dead, and is alive again*: He was Dead in Sin, and Dead in a Law of Sense also; a Condemned Man is a Dead Man, and every one in that Sense is Dead, until Justified and Acquitted of the Law Sentence.

I'd know whether they own the Elect were ever in this sense Dead, or Condemned: If not, 1. I see not then how they can properly be said to be Justified at all, because Justification of Sinners is a discharging them from the Wrath, Guilt, and Condemnation they lay under, before they were so Justified. 2. Let such who deny what I say, shew when, and at what time the Law Sentence was taken off of the Elect, if it was before they obtained a vital Union with Jesus Christ.

(7.) The Sins of the Elect are not actually Pardoned, or they Pronounced, Acquitted, before this Union with Christ appears yet further; because Ministers are commanded to Preach the Gospel to Sinners, undone Sinners, and tell every Unbelieving Sinner he is in a miserable State, even Naked and without Christ, until he has Union with Christ, being both Children of Wrath, and under Condemnation: But if some Men do not thus Believe, how, with a good Conscience, can they Preach after this manner? No, they must say, *Sinners, if you are Elect, you are actually Justified, whether you Believe or not; and all your Sins are actually Pardoned, tho' you do not know it, or have not the Evidence of it in your own Consciences*. But would not this be strange Doctrine, and such that would expose Religion to Shame and Reproach, or least wise such Preachers? Or can that be a Truth that is not fit to be Preached? or if it be thought fit to be Preached, can it tend to the Conversion of Sinners?

Lastly, The Holy Ghost convinceth all Persons, whom he convinceth effectually of Sin, that before they are United to Christ, they were in a sad and deplorable State and Condition, ask any convinced Sinner this Question.

Quest. *Pray, what was your State and Condition, before you was helped to Believe, or to receive Jesus Christ, by Nature?*

Ans. O (says he) Sir, a sad and miserable State and Condition, for I was Condemned and under God's Wrath, &c.

Now, doth not the Holy Ghost convince them, that this was their State; and that they were Naked, &c. without Christ's Righteousness: Sure, he that has Christ's Righteousness Imputed to him, can't be said to be Naked. And before, the Holy Spirit is a true and faithful Witness, and being God he cannot Lye. Not that I deny a federal Union of the Elect; from Eternity, the Son of God was our Surety; he then received a Grant for us, and we received it in him, according to 2 Tim. 1. 7. and Tit. 1. 2.

But

Union
with
Christ dis-
chargeth
Sinners of
all their
Debts.

Phile. i. 8.

But no sooner is the Soul Espoused, and Married to Jesus Christ, or hath Union with him by Faith, through the Infusion of the Holy Spirit, but it is actually Discharged: Christ says to the Justice of God, concerning such a Person, as *Paul*, concerning *Onesimus*, to *Philemon*, *If he hath Wronged thee, or Oweth thee any thing, put that upon my Account.* If Justice should demand Payment, (which is impossible) of such faith Jesus Christ, I have paid it; I am responsible for all this Soul Oweth; I Dyed for this Person. I (faith the Soul) plead my Interest in Christ, my Union with Christ; for that Satisfaction which he made to Thee, O Justice, for all my Debts, and horrid Crimes, is my Legal Discharge at God's Bar, in the Court of Heaven: Is not this, my Brethren, a blessed Effect of the Soul's Marriage Union with Christ? What Perplexity are some in, that are far in Debt, and have nothing to Pay? They cannot Sleep, nor take their natural Rest, for fear of an Arrest, and of going to Prison. Oh! (faith the poor Creature) what shall I do? I am fallen into the Hands of a just Man, one that will not forgive me a Farthing, of what I Owe him; I am run out of all I had to Trade with, by my own extravagant and profuse Living, and he is Incensed against me, and, alas! I have not one Penny to pay, nor no Friend, nor Brother to help me, Oh, I must go to Prison, and there lye as long as I live!

Just thus it is, with a poor Sinner, one that is an Unbeliever; he is run out of all that God lent him, by his horrid Wickedness, and Owes to God a vast Sum, and there is none can help him; no Friend hath he to Satisfy the Justice of God; yet, without there be a full Satisfaction, to Prison he must go, even to the worst of Prisons, to *Hell it self*: Ah, what is it to go to an Earthly Prison, to this, viz. to be cast into utter Darkness, to lye in a Furnace of Fire to all Eternity!

But now, if this poor Guilty Wretch will but Espouse and Marry Jesus Christ, he is immediately Discharged of all the Danger he was in before. Such is the happy Estate of all that have actual Union with Jesus Christ.

Justification an effect of Union.

VII. From it follows another blessed Effect of this happy Union, namely, *Free Justification*. The Soul of a Believing Sinner is accepted in Christ, as perfectly Righteous.

Brethren, I know some do not distinguish between Pardon of Sin, and Free Justification, but make it all one act of God; but, as I conceive, there is a great Difference, tho' it is granted, no Person that is Pardoned, but he is also Justified.

Yet, evident it is, a Man that is a Criminal, and brought to the Bar to Plead, and is found Guilty, may, as an act of the King's Grace, be Pardoned, as to that Obligation he lyes under to Punishment; but he may not, cannot be said to be Acquitted, Justified, or declared Righteous, and an Innocent Person. But every Believing Sinner, or every Person that Espouseth the Lord Jesus, through the Imputation of Christ's perfect Righteousness, is Justified, Acquitted, and declared Innocent, and without Spot, at the Bar of God's Justice. Christ's Righteousness is put upon that Soul, and accounted his, as if it was his very own, and wrought out by himself; so that in this respect, he is all Fair, and hath no Spot in him, (as Christ speaks of his Spouse) When God Pardons a Sinner, he deals with him in a way of Mercy, but when he Justifies him, he deals with him in a way of Righteousness; *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with Garments of Salvation; he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with Jewels.* So that a Believer may not only say, in the Lord I have Pardon, and Remission of Sins, but also, *In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength. Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* That is, to their Charge that are actually in Christ, or United to him. For before an Elect Sinner Believes, the Law hath power, and doth Charge him, and divine Justice Chargeth him, but when he Believes none can Charge him; for it is God that Justifieth. *Who shall Condemn, it is Christ that dyed.* 'Tis Christ the Son of God, he that is Equal with God, that is, God as well as Man.

Isa. 61. 10.

Isa. 45. 24.

Rom. 8. 33, 34.

Hence he hath made a sufficient Satisfaction, and an Atonement to divine Justice, or rather, *that is risen again*. Which shews our full Discharge from Sin in him; we were all virtually Justified, when he was raised from the Dead, and we are actually Justified, when we apply, or receive the Atonement; *If we confess our Sins, he is Faithful and Just to forgive us our Sins.* Not only Merciful and Gracious, but Faithful and Just; he will not exact from us Satisfaction, who plead that Atonement his Son hath made for our Sins. Christ having paid our Debts, God cannot be Unjust as not to forgive us, through his Blood.

Rom. 5. 11
1 John 1

Oh, what a Blessing is this! How Happy are they that obtain Union with Christ! They are Justified, and always Justified compleatly, and for ever Justified, and Justified from all things.

Acts, 13. 39.

VIII. Another Effect of this Union is *Regeneration*. No sooner doth Christ

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appe-

Regeneration and Effect of Union.
2 Cor. 5. 17.

Charnock.

1 Cor. 6. 17.

Rom. 8. 9.

Romans 8. 10.

Freedom from Bondage, and the Curse of the Law an Effect of Union with Christ.
2 Cor. 3. 17.
1 Cor. 15. 45.

Joh. 8. 36.

Rom. 8. 15

apprehend us by his Spirit, and inables us to Believe in him; so that we are Spiritually United unto him, but immediately we are Renewed, or Changed into his Image; *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.* Jesus Christ can take no Delight in a black and filthy Creature, no more than a Man can Delight in a filthy Swine. *A contrary Nature, (saith a worthy Writer) cannot unite: Can Fire and Water be united? a good Angel, and an impure Devil?* Now this Union is made by the Infusion of the Holy Spirit, which Immediately works new Habits in the Soul: By Nature we are in the First Adam, and bear his Vile Image, but by Grace we are in the Second Adam, and so partake of his Holy and Heavenly Image; *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit.* It is not a Union simply in Love and Affections, (as some would have it) without a Change of Disposition; the Holy Spirit dwells and operates in that Soul, *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, the same is not his.* The Head and the Members are all of one and the same Nature. Can a loathsome Carcass be united to the Holy Jesus? Or a Sinner be joyned to him, and remain still Filthy? No, no Regeneration immediately follows, as the Effect of this Union. *If Christ be in you, the Body is dead, because of Sin, but the Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness.*

IX. It follows from hence, That as the Effect of this Union with Jesus Christ, the Soul is also set free from Bondage: Now, *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* The Lord Christ, tho' he be a Man, yet not a meer Man; he is called, *A quick'ning Spirit.* The first Man, Adam, was made a living Soul, the last Man, Adam, was made a quick'ning Spirit. And, where he is, or dwells in any Soul, there is Liberty: Such that are United to him, are Discharged from the Spirit of Bondage; they are set at Liberty from the Bondage of the Law, and the Curse thereof: *If the Son therefore make you free, then are you free indeed.* Made Free, or set at Liberty from the Servitude and Slavery of Sin, of the Law, of Death and Hell: They that are of the Law, or not dead to the Law, and so not Married to Christ, but are in Bondage, under the killing Power of it, being possessed with a base, servile, slavish Spirit, being Servants of Lusts and Corruption; but Believers, thro' this divine Union, are deliver'd from this woful State; *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

That Soul that is in the First Adam, may be said to be Married to the Law,

is evident, which is a cruel Husband, the Letter killeth, as many as are under the Law, are under the Curse. Mount Sinai Covenant gendreth to Bondage; for this Agar is Mount-Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is in Bondage with her Children. Gal. 4. 24. 25.

He therefore that seeks for Justification by the Law, or by his own Righteousness, or according to the Terms of the First Covenant, is in a woful Condition; the Law being not dead to him, nor he dead to that; *Know ye not, Brethren, for I speak to them that know the Law, how the Law hath dominion over a Man, as long as he liveth.* By the Law, he means the Law of Wedlock, and all that are under the First Covenant, are Married to the Law, as to an Husband, See the Fourth Verse; *Wherefore Brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law, by the Body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, &c.*

Therefore Believers are freed from the Malediction, and from the rigid Exaction, and the Irritation of the Law; but now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead, wherein we were held: The Law as a Covenant of Works is the Strength of Sin, and the Effects of both is Dead, so long as a Man is under the Power or Dominion of them; but Believers, thro' their Union with Christ, are freed from both. Rom. 8. 6.

X. Another glorious Effect of this Marriage Union with Christ, is an undoubted Right to, and Interest in all that Christ hath. He indows the Soul with all his Spiritual Goods, as the Husband indows the Wife he Marries, with all his worldly Goods: This all, know is the Effect of a Marriage Union. Tho' a Prince should Espouse and Marry a poor Virgin, even take her off the Dung-hill, (as it were) yet no sooner is she Married to him, but she is a Queen, and is also Interested in all he hath; She hath a rich Dowrey according to his Dignity and Grandeur: So it is here, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. They have a Right and Title to all things that are Christ's: But, how comes this to pass? See the next Words, *Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* The Word is theirs, the Ministers of Christ are theirs; the Ordinances and the Promises are theirs, even all the Promises are theirs; all that Grace that is in Christ, that Wisdom that is in Christ, is theirs, that have a real Union with him. My Peace I give unto you. That Grace that is in Christ, and that Peace that flows from Christ, is theirs, that have Union with him.

All

All a Believers Wants, shall therefore be Supplied, and that Richly too ; Jesus Christ is not an unkind Husband (as you have heard) but of a Loving, Generous and Bountiful Spirit.

Mat. 15. 18. Pfal. 23. 1. He is an unkind Husband, that denies his dear Wife any thing which she needs, or hath the want of, to make her Life Comfortable unto her ; Woman (faith Christ) *be it to thee, as thou wilt.* Take what thou wilt. If David could say, *because the Lord was his Shepherd, he should not want,* how much more may a Saint say, *The Lord is my Husband, therefore I shall not Want,* because this Relation is stronger, and more intimate, nearer and obliging. No Man ever hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as the Lord the Church : For we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.

Eph. 5. 29. 30. He that communicates to us his own Flesh to Eat, and his Blood to Drink, be-fore will with-hold no good thing from us, which he knows will do us Good : Phil 4. 19. *My God shall supply all your Need, according to his Riches in Glory, by Christ Jesus.* Or by virtue of that Union you have with him. Believers have manifold Wants ; they may say with David, the best of them, *I am poor and needy.*

Pfal. 34. 10. Rev. 2. 9. A sincere Christian knows he is Poor, He sees his Wants. I (faith Christ) *know thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty.* But, contrariwise, a formal Christian, like the Church of Laodicea, thinks himself Rich, and increased in Goods, and has need of nothing. But let the Wants of Believers be what they will, the Lord Jesus will see them all Supply'd ; They that fear the Lord, shall want no Good thing.

Pfal. 73. 24. 1. Do they want Counsel ? Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterwards receive me to Glory.

James 1. 5. 2. Do they want Wisdom ? If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

Joh. 14. 18. 3. Do they want Comfort ? I will not leave you Comfortless, I will come unto you.

Pfal. 84. 11. James 4. 6. 4. Do they want Grace, more Grace ? He will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he with hold from them that walk uprightly. He giveth more Grace, wherefore he saith, *He resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

Isa. 40. 31. 5. Do they want Strength ? They that waiteth on the Lord, shall renew their Strength. I will strengthen thee, I will uphold thee, by the Right-Hand of my Righteousness.

Pfal. 103. 3. 6. Do they want Healing ? Christ is their Physician, as well as their Bridegroom, he hath the Balm of Gilead ; Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, and healeth all thy Diseases.

Sinner, Sinner, thou hast many running Sores, and dangerous Wounds in thy Soul ; thy Wounds stink, and are corrupt : From the Crown of thy Head, to the Soul of thy Foot, there is nothing but Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores. But no sooner dost thou Espouse Jesus Christ, but he will Heal them all, and make thee Whole ; the Lost Soul he came to Seek and to save ; and the Sick and Wounded he came to Heal ; but if thou dost not Believe in him, Espouse him, thou wilt certainly Perish eternally of thy Wounds, and Soul Sickness : For nothing but an Application of Christ's Blood, by Faith, can Heal thee.

7. Dost thou want Rest ? Art thou Weary and Heavy Laden ? Oh, then Believe in Christ ; come to Christ, tho thy Sins are never so Heavy upon thee, tho never so great a Burden to thee, yet he will Ease thee ; Come to me, all ye that Labour, and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest.—Cast thy Burden upon the Lord, he shall Sustain thee. Luke 10. Mat. 11. 28.

Nay, Brethren, Believers themselves have their Burdens ; We that are in this Tabernacle do Groan, being Burdened. But Jesus hath already borne all our Grief, and carried our Sorrows. 2 Cor. 5. 4. Isa. 53. 4.

1. Christ hath borne the Burden of our Sins ; the Guilt of all our Sins were laid upon him ; The Lord hath laid upon him, the Iniquity of us all.

2. He hath borne the Burden of our Duties and Obedience : That Obedience God required of us, was a perfect Conformity to the Requirements of the holy Law, which we were not able to do, that Yoke we were not able to bear, but the Lord Jesus in our Nature, and in our Stead, hath borne it for us.

3. He hath also borne that fore and amazing Burden of God's Wrath, which was due to us for our Breach of the Law, and that on purpose to Free us, to Deliver us, and all that do truly Believe in him, from it for ever.

4. Nay, my Brethren, Christ bears part of another Burden of ours ; I mean the Burden of our Afflictions and Sorrows.

1. By way of Sympathy ; He is touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities. Heb. 4. 15

2. He bears now our Sorrows and Burden of Afflictions, and Infirmities, by Succouring and Supporting us : Underneath are the everlasting Arms. Deut. 32. 27.

3. By Sweetning all our Afflictions, with his own gracious Presence. When thou passest through the Water, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee ; when thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee. Isa. 43. 3.

4. By Teaching us by all our Afflictions. We have not the Rod of Correction, without

without his Gracious Instruction :

5. By Sanctifying all our Afflictions to us, making them of great use and profit to our Souls : *All things shall work together for Good, to them that love God.*

6. By purging us thereby from all our Filth and Pollutions. Affliction is the Furnace of Christ, in and by which, he refines his Gold, and makes it more pure.

U S E.

Now, Is it not (think you) a blessed Thing to be in a state of Union with Christ ? Oh, that these things might move some of you, that are yet in your Sins, to come to this Wedding, and receive Jesus Christ ! But I can go no further at this time.

S E R M O N VIII.

M A T T H. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

D O C T R I N E.

That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse poor Sinners.

THE Argument I am upon to persuade Sinners to Espouse Jesus Christ, was taken from the happy and blessed Effects that attend, or accompany the Soul's Marriage Union with Christ. To proceed

XI. Another Effect of this Union, is the Blessing, and great Priviledge of Adoption.

Marry the King's Son, and his Father will become your Father.

Brethren, That Spirit which unites the Soul to the Lord Jesus, is the Spirit of Adoption.

There are Three Ways, by which, as I conceive, Adoption comes in.

1. By a Marriage with Christ.

2. By a Grant, or Free Gift.

3. By the Holy Spirit, which is the Bond of this Union.

The Holy Ghost, that unites us to Christ, as I said, is a Spirit of Adoption:

Rom. 8.
15.

For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Compare this with that in Gal.

Gal. 4.

6. *Because you are Sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, crying Abba, Father.*

Because you are Sons] They were Sons by Virtue of their Union with Christ, and thereby partook of his Holy Nature, by Regenerating Grace. But yet this Priviledge of Adoption is further confirmed and strengthened by the holy Spirit, by the Indwelling of the Spirit : The Habits of Grace gives us this Priviledge, yet it is the Act, and Exercise of Grace, influencing the Soul, that makes us cry, *Abba, Father* ; or to Plead this Priviledge.

Brethren, every Believer hath the Spirit of Adoption in him ; but every Believer cannot, to the same degree of

Boldness, cry *Abba, Father*. The Reasons may be.

1. Because Grace in some may be Weak. A Child new Born, cannot cry, Father, Father, though e'er a short time, when grown up, it can do it : So it may be here:

2. In some others also, the Spirit may be Griev'd, and so may withdraw its Testimony for a time, from such Christians, and they thereby may be left under many Fears and Doubts. Oh, how dangerous is it to Quench or Grieve the Holy Spirit of God ! Eph. 4.
30.

3. Or it may be, because a Child of God may be under great and grievous Temptations ; Satan may get much Advantage against him, and weaken his Hope and Confidence in God, touching his Union with Christ, and his Adoption. Nay, many have not only been Tempted and too far overcome, by Satan, but also been Deserted by the Lord, as *Heman, Job*, and others. *Job* cryed out, *his hope was perished* ; and if you read the 88th Psalm, you may see the Distresses upon this account of *Heman*.

4. The Holy Ghost is a free Agent, and therefore he may testify unto the Soul it's Adoption, when he pleaseth, and sees Occasion. And

(1.) The Holy Spirit may Suspend its Testimony, to Humble the Soul : Sometimes a Saint may be lifted up, and then to bring him to the Foot of Christ, the Holy Ghost may suspend its Witnessing Influences for a time. (2.) Or, the Holy Spirit may do it, to put a Believer the more upon the use and exercise of Grace. (3.) Or to cause the Soul, the more to Prize his Testimony, as touching this high and sacred Priviledge.

5. A Believer may have the Spirit of Adoption, and cry *Abba, Father*, and yet want Comfort ; tho' the Testimony may be strong, yet the Troubles of the Soul may be great. *David* calls upon his

his Soul, and says, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet Praise him; who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* He pleads his Relation to God, though his Comfort was gone. So in *Isa. 50. 10.*

2. The Priviledge of Adoption, is by way of Grant, or Free Gift; *to them gave he Power, or Priviledge, to become the Sons of God.* But it is not given to any but to them only, that do Receive and Espouse Jesus Christ. *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power, to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.*

One Sign, or Evidence of our Adoption, is our Regeneration, as the very next words shew; *Which were Born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.*

Adoption and Regeneration always go together; no Soul is Adopted, but he is also Regenerated. Oh! this is a great and glorious Priviledge of ours: For,

1. To be Children, is to lye near the Father's Heart: God Loves his own Children, which he hath Adopted to himself, and hath begotten by his own Word and Spirit. No Father hath such a great Love to his Children, as the Lord hath unto his: *And hath loved them, as he hath loved me.* Considered as he is Mediator, with an inconceivable, unchangeable, tender, and an everlasting Love.

2. To be Cared for, and Pittyed as a Father Cares for, and Pitties his Children, when they are Afflicted, and in Mi-
fery: *As a father pittieeth his Children, so doth the Lord pittie them that fear him.*

3. To be Fed at his own Table; this Priviledge belongs to Children, and to dwell in their Father's House: They are allowed to dwell with God, and God dwelleth with them: *As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People.*

4. To be Taught and Instructed by the Lord, as a Father Teacheth and Instructeth his Children. How careful was *Abraham* in doing this, with *David*, and many others.

5. To be Cloathed by the Father. A Father Cloathes all his Children at his own Cost. So the holy God puts a glorious Robe upon all his Children, even the perfect Righteousness of his own Son Jesus Christ. Our Elder Brother hath a Garment wrought out for them all, that are his Father's Children, which the Holy Ghost puts upon them, and in which the Father always beholds them.

6. To be Preserved and Protected as Children: What Father will suffer his Children to be Devoured, and Torn to pieces, if he can Defend them?

7. Heirship. *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with Christ.* (*'Tis not thus with all the Children of an Earthly Prince, viz. They are not all Co-Heirs with their Elder Brother: See Gal. 4. 7.*) Hence they Serve God with Filial Fear and Love.

XIV. Another Effect of this Union with Jesus Christ, is Sanctification; *He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one.*

Brethren, There is a Necessity of Union of Nature between the Sanctifying Saviour, and the Sanctified Sinner. Our Union with Christ, and Sanctification, is the Effects of the Hypostatical Union of the Two Natures in the Person of Christ. Every Believer is Justified by his Blood, and Sanctified by his Spirit. These are attributed to his taking our Nature into Union with his Divine Person.

All the Elect were then Vertually taken into Union with himself, in him, as their common Head and Representative: And, as the Union of the Divine Nature, Sanctified the Human Nature, in the Person of Christ, in the Womb of the Virgin, even so, when Sinners (tho unclean in themselves) are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, they are actually Sanctified, and made Holy. The Spirit, which is the Band of our Union, on Christ's part, is a Spirit of Holiness, or of Sanctification. And, like as it is Impossible for the Branch to bear like Fruit with the Vine, until it is Grafted into the Vine, so it is Impossible for Sinners to be Holy, or to bring forth the Fruits of Holiness and Sanctification, until they are Grafted into him, by the Spirit, and Faith.

By this also, we may know, Whether we have attain'd to the Blessing of Union. *Such were some of you, but ye are washed and sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Tho a Person may be never so filthy, and unclean before his Union with Christ, yet this Union doth not leave him filthy, and polluted; for, as he hath the Righteousness of Christ Imputed to him, to his Justification, and Remission of Sin, so he hath also receiv'd the Holy Spirit, creating in his Soul new Habits, and gracious Dispositions, by which he is enabled, and influenc'd, to Dye unto Sin, and so to Live unto God.

XII. Another blessed Effect of Union with Christ, is, Free Access unto the Throne of Grace. *Therefore being Justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, thro'*

Rom. 8. 17

Rom. 8. 17

Heb. 2. 11. Sanctification an effect of union.

1 Cor. 6. 11

Free access to God an effect of union. Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4,

our Lord Jesus Christ. Not Justified before, or without Faith; nor being Justified, and by Faith have Peace in our Conscience (as some would have the Text be read, (falsly placing the Point at Justified) but, *being Justified by faith*, &c. respecting the Object, Faith apprehendeth, or applies; *We have Peace with God*, thro' the Obedience, or Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The Effect of this is here Opened by the Apostle. (1.) Peace with God. (2.) Access unto God: *By whom also we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand.* (3.) And, *Rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

A Person may be Reconciled to his Prince, and yet not be admitted into his Presence; he may not at any time have free Access to him.

Or, if he should have such Access, yet he may not have his Petition heard, and all his Wants and Necessities answered: But Believers have *this* free Access to God, thro' Jesus Christ. They may come with Boldness to the Throne of Grace; and also, always Speed when they come *In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by Faith and Love*, in whom, or by being United to him.

1. May Boldly, or Freely come; come to God, as unto a Father.

2. May have free Liberty of Speech, even such Words, as becomes a Child that approaches the Presence of such a dread Majesty.

3. With an Assurance of having his Ear open'd, to our just and righteous Requests and Petitions.

4. Have also a ready Answer, if they ask in Christ's Name, such things that are according to the Will of God, provided, they ask *in Faith, believingly*, and in Love to the Honour of God.

And this, not only for themselves, but for others also. God would Hear his Servant Job, for his Three Friends, when he would not Hear them, for themselves: *My Servant Job shall pray for you, and him will I accept, &c.*

Some are greater Favourites in the Court of Heaven, than others, or are more Accepted, or better Belov'd, than other Saints may be: Or, in a better Frame than others are; or they may have more Faith

How ready was K. Ahasuerus to hear Esther; *What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and, what is thy Request? It shall be given thee, to the Half of the Kingdom.* Believers being the Spouse of Christ, have a wonderful Interest and Acceptation in the Court of Heaven.

(1.) Because the way, by which they come by it, is that new and living way, God hath consecrated through the Vail, that is to say, Christ's Flesh: He procu-

red this Free Access for us, by his own Blood. (2.) Because Jesus Christ hath also Purchased all things they want for them, at such a Dear Rate. (3.) Because they are so Near and Dear to Christ, and to the Father, through Him. (4.) Because the Holy Spirit frames all their Desires and Helps, and Influenceth them in all the good and just Petitions: *We know not what to Pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with groanings, that cannot be utter'd.*

(5.) Because God hath laid Himself under gracious Promises, to Hear them, and to give them all things they Need.

(6.) Because they are Invited to come with Boldness; they are Required to come, and draw near to God. (7.) Because Jesus Christ himself, is always at the Father's Right-Hand, to take their Requests, and Offer them up to God, with the most Sweet Odours of his own Intercession.

XIV. Another Effect of the Soul's Union with Christ, *Is a victory over all our Enemies, whether within, or without.* Jesus Christ hath Overcome them all, not only for himself, but for all that are his; *be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.*

1. Christ's Victory was ours; he overcame as the Captain of our Salvation. He Overcame Sin, and we in him. He Overcame Temptations, yea all its Allurements, when Satan shewed him all the Kingdoms of the World; and we then Overcame the World in him. He Overcame Death, as our Head and Husband, and we also Overcame Death in him.

2. Moreover, we Actually are made Conquerours, thro' our Union with him. *Faith is, my Brethren, a victorious Grace, This is the Victory that Overcomes the World, even our Faith.*

By Partaking of his Spirit, we are Partakers of his Strength. Hence we are said to be *strengthened with all might, according to his glorious Power.* Faith makes us Victorious, as it did the Worthies of Old, over all worldly Desires, Fears, Hopes and Joys, which are the great hindrance of our Obedience to God. *i. e.* the Instrument, the Weapon, by which we Overcome, and which Virtually Includes in it this Victory, as the Effect includes the Cause, is our Faith, which in our Union is planted in our Hearts; and thus we are in Christ, more than Conquerours.

His Victory gave all the Elect a Full Assurance of Overcoming: And hence a Believer may Triumph over Death and the Grave, *Oh, Death! Where is thy Sting? Oh, Grave! Where is thy Victory?*

Saving
knowledg
an Effect
of Union.

Jer. 31. 34.

Joh. 15. 15.

Fruitful-
ness in
Grace is
the Effect
of union.
with
Christ.

Rom. 7. 4.

Joh. 15.
1, 2, 3, 4,
5.

Gal. 5. 22.

XV. Another Effect of our Union with Christ is, *A clear and full manifestation, or a Saving Knowledge of the Lord. I will Betroth thee unto me in Faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* This is the great Promise of the New Covenant, by which we become the Lords. *They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.*

In this Covenant we are Married to Jesus Christ, and this is the Effect of our Conjugal Union. Christ will hide nothing from his Spouse, that is for her Good, and his own Glory: *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

Some have only the Light of Nature afforded them; they know no more of God, than the visible things of the Creation teacheth them, by the Help of their Natural Reason.

Others have the Light of Common Gifts, and Grace: They have the written Word, and great Light by those Gifts of Knowledge Christ hath indew'd them with.

But Believers have the Saving Light and Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, *which is Life eternal.*

XVI. Another Effect of this blessed Union, is, *Fruitfulness in Grace, and in all the Fruits of Righteousness.* No Man can bring forth the Fruits or Product of Grace, before the Habits of Grace are Implanted in their Souls; nor are those Habits implanted in any Soul, but in those only that are united to Christ: *Wherefore, Brethren, we also are become dead to the Law, by the Body of Christ, that ye should be Married to another, even to him that was raised from the Dead, that we should bring forth Fruit to God.*

It appears evident, That one special End, as well as an Effect of this Marriage Union, is Fruitfulness, as it is among Men; first Marriage, and then Fruit, as the Effect of it, in a natural way: As Grafting into the Stock must precede the partaking of the Sap, so as to bring forth Fruit, so we must be united to Christ in a Spiritual way, before we can bear Spiritual Fruit. Nature may bring forth the Fruits of Mortality, (as it did in some of the old Heathens) but the Fruits of the Spirit is the Product of Supernatural Grace. *The Fruits of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Meekness, Goodness, Faith, Temperance:* A little to Open each of these.

Love. That is, the Effects of Union, Love to God, and Jesus Christ; Love to the Church of God, to the Interest of God, and to the Truths of God. Moreover, Love to all Men.

Joy. This denotes that full and sweet

Satisfaction the Soul of a Believer hath, in this his happy Union, or Marriage with Christ, He, or She, being unspeakably Delighted in it, esteeming it their chiefest and greatest Good, and Happiness: *Whom having not seen, ye Love, in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet Believing, ye rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.*

Peace. Or, Quietude of Mind and Conscience; *they had, and all Believers have Peace with God.* Moreover, Peace here, denotes a Peaceable Temper to all the Saints, or in Peace they possess their Souls.

Long-Suffering. This is opposed to seeking Revenge, or retaining Prejudice in our Hearts to any Brother; bearing, and forbearing with each other; suffering Wrong, rather than seeking to Right ourselves in an undue way, or manner.

Gentleness and Goodness. viz. Sweetness, and Kindness of Temper, by which we avoid all Hard-heartedness, and Uncharitableness to each other; mutually endeavouring to accomodate ourselves so, one to another, that we may be helpful to each other on all Occasions.

Faith. I take this to refer to Faithfulness, in keeping our Covenant with God, and his Church; and our word and Promise in all our Commerce and Dealings one with another, and with all Men.

Meekness. This denotes Humbleness of Mind; *Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of Heart.* This Grace is opposed to Pride, Haughtiness of Mind, and Self-conceitedness; as also to Wrath and undue Anger and Passion.

Temperance. viz. A sober Use of the Creature, and all Creature Injoyments; not having our Hearts set upon them in an inordinate manner. *But I say unto you Brethren, the time is short, it remaineth that both they that have Wives, be as if they had none, ver. 29. And they that Weep, as tho' they Wept not; and they that Rejoyce, as though they Rejoyced not, and they that Buy, as tho' they Possessed not. v. 30. And they that Use this World, as not abusing it, because the Fashion of this World passeth away, v. 31.*

Oh! Christians, see to it; these blessed Fruits of Grace are the Effects which all those who have a real Union with Christ, experience.

XVII. *Final Perseverance* is also an Effect of Union with Christ.

1. This Happy Union tends to make Christ, and all Believers, but one Mystical Body, or one Mystical Christ; and, should he lose one Member, he would have an imperfect Body; *We are all Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his*

1 Pet. 8. 1.

Mat 11. 29

1 Cor. 7. 29.

Final Perseverance
an Effect
of union.

Eph. 5.30. See the Parable of the Sower

his Bones. Will a Man suffer the Members of his Body to be torn to pieces, and lost for ever, if he hath Power or Wisdom to preserve them? Or, hath Christ less Love to the Members of his Mystical Body, than a Man hath of the Members of his Natural Body?

2. This Union must preserve every Believer from Final Apostacy, or else the Prayer of our blessed Lord was not Heard and Answer'd. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.*

3. If the Union betwixt the Father and Jesus Christ, be indissoluble, then the Union betwixt Christ, and all true Believers, is indissoluble; but the former is True, therefore the latter is True also: *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made Perfect in one.* Joh. 17.23

4. If the Seed remains in all that are in a State of Union with Christ, then not one of them can Fall finally away, but the Seed remains; therefore they cannot finally Fall; *The Seed remains, they cannot Sin, because they are born of God.* 1 John. 3.9.

5. Christ's Love to, and Care of his Spouse, is such, that they cannot finally Perish. His Love is unchangeable, and abiding; besides, he Betroths all which he Betroths for ever.

The Resurrection an Effect of union with Christ. Rom. 8.11

XVIII. The Resurrection to Eternal Life, at the last Day, is likewise an Effect of this glorious Union. *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus Christ from the Dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Both Body and Soul of a Believer is in Union with Christ, and as all the Elect by Vertue of Christ's Resurrection, are, and shall be raised in their Spirits, to a state of Spiritual Life, so also all their Bodies shall be raised at the last Day, or else a whole Christ shall not be raised; *for as in Adam, all Dye; so even in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. 15.22.

Brethren, as all the First Adam's Seed, or all that stood in Union with him, Dye, so all the Second Adam's Seed, or all that stand in a state of Union with him, shall be raised to Eternal Life, at the last Day, by vertue of that Union. True, all the Ungodly shall also be raised, but not by vertue of Union with Christ, because they never were in him; but they shall be raised by vertue of the mighty Power of Christ, not in Mercy, but in Wrath.

XIX. Glorification also is an Effect of our Union with Christ. He, as our Fore-runner, is already Glorified in Heaven, and we in him, as our Head; and we shall actually be Glorified with him also, at the Resurrection Day, both Body and Soul: *And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* That Glory the Father hath given unto Christ, he gives by Promise to all his, and will actually bestow upon them: *For, whom he Justified, them also he Glorified.* Joh. 17.22. Rom. 8.30.

XX. As an Effect of Union with Jesus Christ, Believers shall be in the same place with Christ. This is that which they Long for, and it shall be granted unto them. Shall not the Husband, and his dear Wife, and beloved Spouse, dwell together? *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory.* And again he saith, *Where I am, there shall my Servant be.* John 17.24.

Application.

1. From hence we may Infer, That by vertue of this Union with Christ, Believers are delivered from all things that are Evil, whether here, or hereafter; and are, and shall be possessed with all things that are truly and eternally Good. *i.e.* Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

2. And then, is it not, Oh ye Sinners, your true and only Interest, and highest Concernment, to Espouse the Lord Jesus?

3. Moreover, it tends further to aggravate the Sin and Folly of all those who make Light of this Marriage Supper.

4. Also from hence, may all Believers receive no small Comfort and Consolation. What Tongue can express their Happiness? Nay, what Heart can conceive of it? Lift up your Heads ye Saints that are Dejected; Why do you Mourn, ye Princely Ones? What Glory are you Heirs of! Oh, be not Troubled, tho' your State, at present, is mean and low, Christ hath Espoused you, *and when he appeareth, ye shall also appear with him in glory.* Col. 3.3.

But so much at this time.

SERMON IX.

MATTH. XXII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.

DOCTRINE.

That the great God hath sent his own Son, to espouse poor Sinners.

over thee, and covered thy Nakedness, and entred into a Covenant with thee; saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.

This was the time of Christ's Love, he first look'd upon us, and had Pity on us, and cast his Skirt over us, which was his own Robe of Righteousness. His Look on us begets Faith in our Souls, by which we apprehend, and take hold of him. *Then I washed thee with Water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy Blood from thee, and anoynted thee with Oyl.* Verf. 9.

2. Christ brings it about by his Death. All were under the Curse of the Law, to which every Soul of Man was Married, in a Covenant of Works; which Covenant could not be Dissolved, and the Sinner be delivered from this their first Husband, but by the Death of Jesus Christ. *But now being delivered from the Law, that being dead, wherein we were held.* And to this end (as he sheweth) *That we might be Married to another, even to him, that God raised from the Dead, &c.* Union with Christ by means of his death, or by which the Law becomes dead to us and we to that. Rom. 7. 6. Verse 4.

Nay, my Brethren, the Law is not only Dead by the Death of Christ, (as it was a Covenant of Works) but by his Death, i. e. by the Effects thereof, we are become Dead to the Law also; *Ye also are become Dead to the Law, by the Body of Christ.*

We now see, that there is no Relief, no Help, no Justification, nor Eternal Life, by the Works of the Law, *Sin revived.* And thus is this glorious Union Wrought and Accomplish'd by Jesus Christ. Rom. 7. 9.

2. Jesus Christ worketh about this Union, by his own free Offer, or Tender of himself, and his infinite Love to Sinners in the Gospel: He makes a free Offer of himself, with all his Benefits, to every one that will, or hath a Heart to receive and imbrace him. *If any Man Thirst, let him come to me and Drink.---Come to me, all ye that Labour and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest.* Christ offers himself freely to Sinners as Sinners. Joh. 7. 37. Mat. 11. 28.

He that comes unto me, I will in no wise cast out. The Lord Jesus stands with his Arms spread open, to Receive all that come to him. He says, *Behold me, behold me, -- Look to me, and be Saved, all ye ends of the Earth.* Joh. 6. 36.

Thirdly, This Union with Christ, is more immediately Effected by the Spirit, or by the Third Person of the Trinity. It is, Brethren, the more immediate Work, and Office of the Holy Spirit. Our Union with Christ is by the Holy Spirit.

M m m m m

THAT it is (you have heard) the Sinners highest Concernment to Accept of Christ, and Believe in Christ, or to Espouse the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, I shall shew you how, or by what Ways and Means, the Soul's Marriage Union with Jesus Christ, is accomplished, or brought about.

1st: Note this by the way, that it is Effected, or brought about, by all the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity.

First. The Spring, or Original Cause of it, is the Love of God the Father; the Father from Everlasting, Lov'd all those that are Espoused by Christ.

This Marriage Union doth not depend on the Will, and good Pleasure of Man, not on the Creature: No, for shall the corrupt Will of Man, be the Rule of God's Will? Some tell you, if the Creature will receive Christ, then God will move in a way of Grace, and Favour towards him: After this Notion Jesus Christ might have no Spouse at all, nay, his Death might prove to be in vain.

2. This Union is wrought by the Free Gift, or Donation of God the Father. The Father gives all those to the Son, which he Espouseth; *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me.* Joh. 6. 36.

Secondly. This Marriage Relation is wrought out, or Effected, by the Son of God, who doth Espouse poor Sinners.

1. By Christ's recommending his Infinite, and inconceivable Love to the Sons and Daughters of Men; his early Love, even from everlasting.

Brethren, Jesus Christ readily Accepted of his Father's Choice; nay, his Love was as early set upon Lost Sinners, as the Fathers: *His delight was with the Sons of Men.* The Sinner doth not first fall in Love with Jesus Christ, and so their Love draws forth his Love to them. No, that cannot be, for when Christ Loved us, we Hated him; our Hearts Naturally were filled full of Enmity against God, and Jesus. *Now, when I passed by, I looked upon thee, and thy time was the time of Love. -- And I spread my Skirt*

Jan. 31. 1697.

How union with Christ is effected.

Union with Christ depends on the Will of God.

Prov. 8.

Ezek. 16. 18.

Office of the Holy Ghost to unite Sinners to the blessed Jesus; as the Father gave the Son for us, and as the Son Dyed and shed his Blood for us, so the Holy Spirit makes his Blood to become Effectual and Efficacious to us.

The work
and office
of the Spirit.

1. It is the Work and Office of the Spirit, to enlighten the Eyes of poor Blind Sinners, to behold their woful Condition by Nature, and to Convince them of the Evil of Sin. As also to behold a transcendent Beauty and Excellency in Jesus Christ.

2. The Holy Spirit doth it, by infusing new and gracious Habits in their Souls.

3. By breaking them off from that Obligation to their former Husband, the Law, under which they lay; destroying all Hope and Expectation of Justification by the Law, or any Righteousness of their own.

4. By causing the poor convinced Sinner to Dye to Sin, and so to Divorce them from all their Old Lovers, i. e. *The Lusts of the Eyes, the Lusts of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life.*

5. The Holy Spirit doth not only enlighten their Understandings, and Convince their Consciences, but also he Bows and bends their stubborn and Rebellious Wills, which would not yield to Accept of Christ, nor Subject unto him, but by the working of his almighty Power:

6. The Holy Spirit doth it by working Faith in their Souls. No Man can Believe in Christ, Receive Christ, or Espouse him; But as the Spirit helps 'em so to do. *By Grace ye are Saved, through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.*

Eph. 2. 8.

Brethren, It is given to us to Believe; nay, the holy Spirit works Faith in us, after the same manner that God wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the Dead; it is according to the working of his mighty Power.

Eph. 1. 18,

19

Rom. 5. 5.

7. By his shedding abroad the Love of Christ in our Hearts. Love to Christ is not the Product of Nature; Believers do not Love him with a meer Humane Love, but with a Divine Love. Love is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit, or it is a Supernatural Grace, (we have heard of Love-Powder, and I know not what) you may besure the Seed of the Spirit in the Heart of a Sinner, is like unto Spiritual Love-Powder; I mean, this Grace works in us Physically, causing the Soul as soon as it sees Jesus Christ by an Eye of Faith, to fall in Love with him; they cannot but Love him, it is a happy Effect of a blessed Cause.

8. By causing the Sinner to choose Christ as the best Good, in Heaven and Earth; and not to take him only as his Saviour, but also as his Head, Husband,

and only Sovereign, and blessed Prophet, to be Taught and Led by him in all things.

9. By discovering to the Soul, the Necessity of Christ, and that there is no Salvation, but in Christ, and so to build on him alone; and not only to close with him in the first Act of Faith, but helps the Soul to commit it self to Jesus Christ, and wholly to trust and depend upon him for all Supplies, continually in all things, as the Wife depends upon her Husband. To Believe in Christ, is to Live upon him, to Rest on him, and Cleave to him, as the only Beloved of our Affections.

1. Faith is set forth by the Actings of our Senses, viz. Seeing him, Hearing him, Tasting him: *Oh! Taste and see that the Lord is good.* By Feeling him in his powerful Influences, and Love-drawing Operations; by Smelling the Sweet Odour of his divine Grace, his very Name by the Spirit, *is as an Ointment poured out.*

How faith
is set forth
in the
Word of
God.

2. Faith is also set forth by the Actings of our Mind, or by the Actings of the internal Powers of the Soul, viz. By *Desiring* Christ, by *Longing* for him, by *Resolving not to cease, until we find and enjoy him*, by *Knowing him*: to Believe in him, and *knowing him*, the very same thing is meant; and also by putting our Trust in him.

10. The Holy Spirit is so great an Agent, in bringing about this Union, that he helps the Soul wholly to make a Resignation of it self to Christ, so as no longer to be its own, but the Lords.

Application:

1. Exhort.] *To Love Christ, and cleave to him, And there are mighty Motives to persuade Sinners to do this.*

1. Consider what Pangs of Divine Wrath, his precious Soul indur'd! Christ comes to Wooe Sinners in his Bloody Garments: Behold his Hands, his Feet, and his bleeding Side, he comes to wooe you, to intreat you to Open to him, to Receive him, and to Espouse him, thro a Sea of Blood, yea, of his own Blood.

2. Consider his Long-Suffering, his Coming, Standing, Knocking, and Calling upon you at your Doors: *Behold, I stand at the Door, and Knock; Wonder, O ye Heav'ns! See the King at the poor Beggar's Door! The Creator is come to Court and Wooe the sorry Creature, and yet is not Regarded! There the Lord Stands, Crys, Calls, Knocks, and yet the Sinner will not Open the Door, nor Cry out, Oh! who is at my Door?*

Motives
to espouse
Jesus
Christ.
Rev. 3. 20.

Cant. 5. 2.

3. Ponder how Importunate Christ is. His long standing, even till His Head

Head is wet with Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night. His Love in Calling, Intreating, Beseeching Sinners to Imbrace him, surely should move you. No Lover, certainly, useuh more sweet Sollicitations and Persuasions, to obtain the Love of a Virgin, than Jesus Christ doth use, to obtain your Affections: Ho, every one that Thirsteth, come to the Waters.

4. Consider and Ponder, his Complaining and Weeping, when he sees Sinners Refuse him; *He was grieved because of the hardness of their Hearts.* Again, How doth he Complain? *My People will not hearken unto me; Israel will have none of me. --- I have stretched out my Hand all the day long, to a stiff-necked and rebellious people, which walked in a Way that was not good.*

6. Consider these his mournful Expositions, when he is ready to be gone, shews how Importunate he is, to Imbrace Sinners in the Arms of his Love and Mercy. *How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine Heart is turned in me, and my Repentings are kindled together.*

7. His most Earnest and most Importunate Desire to be Received by Sinners, appears also by these Promises of Grace, and Pardon, he hath made to all that Believe in him. *Behold thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest, --- Only acknowledge thine Iniquity. --- Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. --- All manner of Sins and Blasphemy against the Father and the Son, shall be forgiven unto men.*

8. Consider those Threatnings he denounceth against such that do Contemn him, and proceed on in their wicked Ways.

Brethren, it is cursed Rebellion not to Receive and Imbrace this your Sovereign, or to refuse to come to his Feast: *They shall not taste of my Supper.* That is, such shall have no Pardon, no Peace, no Saviour, no Mercy. *He that hath the Son hath Life, but he that hath not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* And again he saith, *But those mine Enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before me.*

9. Consider that Christ's Love is a matchless Love. Oh, see his Infinite Goodness and Condescension, how is he set upon the Espousing of Lost and Undone Sinners! Know, O Soul, tho' thou art never so Low, Base and Vile, yet Jesus Christ will accept of thee; they are the Halt, the Lame, the Blind,

and the maimed, that are receiv'd into his Imbraces. Tho' thou art one of the Poor of this World, and art Cloathed with Raggs, or attended with never so great outward Poverty, or art inwardly Deformed, and Filthy, even as Black as Sin and Hell can make thee, yet if thou come to him, he will receive thee as freely and as readily as if thou wast the highest Monarch in the World.

It is not the greatness of thine Iniquity, nor the multitude of them, nor thy former Refusals of him, that can obstruct this thy happy Union with him, if thou comest now to this Wedding Supper. It is not thy former Revolting, or Backsliding from him, that can hinder it; may be thou art one that hast some time since strong Convictions, and thou hast lost them, or hast made a Profession of the Gospel, but art Backslidden, yet fear not, see what he says; *Go, and proclaim these Words, --- And say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep Anger for ever. --- Only acknowledge thine iniquities.*

II. From hence I also infer, That it is no easy thing for a poor Sinner to fall in Love with Jesus Christ. It is not in the power of Man's Will, to tie this Conjugal Knot, or unite his Heart to the Lord Jesus, but it must be by the Agency of the mighty God, or by the power of the Holy Spirit; all moral Persuasions, though never so strong and powerful, cannot do it any Good, no, we must be drawn to Christ, by the Father, and by the effectual Influences of the Holy Ghost, if ever we are United to Jesus Christ, the Spirit is the Bond of this Union.

2. Exhor.] Sinners, labour to come to this Marriage Feast. Attend upon the Means, Cry to God to send the Spirit to incline your Hearts, bow your Wills, change your Affections.

1. Consider thy Refusal of Christ, is a great Sin, yea the greatest Sin.

1. It is a Sin against the highest and most sublime, and amazing Wisdom of God the Father, who found out this Way to make Fallen Man Happy for ever.

2. It is a Sin against the highest Goodness of God, that was ever manifested: In this was the Love of God manifest, in that he sent his own Son into the World, that we might live thro' him.

3. It is a Sin against the only Remedy God hath provided.

5. It is the highest act of Disobedience against God, who commands thee to Believe on his Son.

6. This

Christ's Love to Backsliding Sinners.

Jer. 3, 12, 13.

'Tis no easy thing for a Sinner to be brought to espouse Jesus Christ.

The evils and dangers of refusing of Christ.

1 Joh. 4.9.

Acts 4.12.

6. This Refusal of Christ, doth cast the highest Contempt upon the Lord Jesus, and tends to stain his Glory. What, wilt thou prefer thy Lusts, above the Lord Jesus Christ?

Joh. 3. 18. 7. It is the Soul-damning Sin; *He that believeth not, is condemn'd already.*

Directions.

It may not be amiss, if I give you a few Directions, about your Closing with Christ, or Espousing of him.

1. See it is the Person of Christ you fall in Love with, it must be for what Christ is, not for what he hath; many eye more the Portion, than the Person, but how Shameful a thing is that, in the sight of all men!

2. You must Espouse a whole Christ, not Jesus only, a Saviour, but Christ the Lord; not simply accept of him, or receive him, as a Priest to Dye for you, but as a King to Rule in you, and to Reign over you; and as he is a Prophet to Teach, Guide and Lead you. It is thus he is offered in the Gospel.

Inherent
Grace
must not
be trusted
in.

3. Joyn nothing with Christ. You must Espouse a Single Christ, Christ alone; not Christ and *Moses*, not Christ and your own Righteousness; no, you must not trust in Christ, and in inherent Grace; not joyn, in point of Justification, the Graces of the Spirit, with the Righteousness of Christ: Faith it self, is no part of the matter of our Justification before God, if your Faith be trusted in, and rely'd upon as any part or procuring Cause of your Acceptation, and Justification at God's Bar, you will appear no better than an Adulteress: Christ will not indure any to be a Corival, or Competitor with him. As he takes us in our Raggs, without any previous Qualifications, or as bare, and simple Sinners, so we must take him as a bare and simple Saviour, joyning Nothing of our own, or any thing that is ours, with him.

A whole
Christ
must be
received
with a
whole
Heart.

4. You must Receive a whole Christ, with a whole Heart, as a whole Christ comprehended all his Offices, so a whole Heart comprehended all our Faculties: *My Son give me thy Heart*, not a part of it, but all of it; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Strength; --their Heart is Divided, now they shall be found Faulty.*

5. You must Espouse the Lord

Jesus immediately, not delay, but forsake your other Lovers, before they leave you; some would have Christ when they can Sin no longer; the present time is the Season Christ hath Chose, and He Loves, Young People, your Youthful Days, *I Love them that Love me, and they that seek me early shall find me: The Fat is the Lords*, that is, the best of the Sacrifice, the best of your days of your Love, and of your Strength.

Christ
must be
immedi-
ly espous-
ed.

Prov. 8. 17

6. You must come up to Christ's Terms, tho they may seem never so hard to the Flesh, thou must pull out a Right Eye, and Cut off a Right Hand; thou must deny thy self; and take up thy Cross and follow him, not one *Dalilah* must be Spared, no Sin Indulged, or Connived at, or Lived in.

Sinners
must come
to Christ's
Terms.

Terror.] What will you do that Condemn, Despise, and Reject the Lord Jesus, or make light of this Marriage Feast? You that love the World, love your Sins, or any thing else above Jesus Christ; what will you do when Death comes, and in the day of Judgment? O know, ye Sinners, that such are Cursed, who love not the Lord Jesus! *If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* Let him be a Curse till the Lord comes, or when the Lord comes; such are Cursed both Living and Dying, and for ever.

Consol.] To you that are Espoused to Jesus Christ, what Comfort and Consolation may this Afford and Administer; O what a choice have you made! Or rather Christ hath made of you! What Princess is thus Honoured! What is all the Preferment that an Earthly King can Raise, any unto, to this Honour! You are Espoused to the Son of this Sublime, this Noble and Mighty King!

Your Husband is a coming, and the Marriage Day is now very near: How sweet will that meeting be in the Air, When you shall lye in the Bosome of the Blessed Jesus for ever: *We shall be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the Air; and so we shall ever be with the Lord.*

1 Thes. 4.
15.

Mat. 25.

Behold the Bridegroom comes, prepare to meet him (get ready) this turns all our Water into Wine; never rest O Believer, untill thou canst say, My Beloved is mine, and I am his. Thus I Close with this point of Doctrine.

S E R M O N X.

M A T T H. XXII. 4.

*And all things are ready, come to the Marriage.*Luke, xiv. xvii. *Come, for all things are now Ready.*

Feb. 7th.
1697.
Why 'tis
called a
Supper.

M *Atthem* calls it a *Dinner*, and St. *Luke*, a *Supper*: The One may allude to the Dispensation of Gospel Grace by the Prophets, they being the *First Servants* that were sent to Invite Sinners to this Wedding. And the Other may refer to the Dispensation of the Gospel, in the *Last Age* of the World; which may, perhaps, from thence, be called a *Supper*: Or, the One to the Beginning of the *Gospel Feast*, and the Other to the Latter-end of it.

In these Words are Four Parts.

1. Plentiful Provisions prepared: *All things are ready.*

2. An Invitation: *Come.*

3. The Nature and Design of the Feast Explained. *Come to the Marriage.* Not to a common, or ordinary Feast, but to a Marriage, viz. To Feed by Faith on Christ, or to Espouse Jesus Christ.

4. A strong Motive, denoting Speed, to come presently: *For all things are [now] ready.*

D O C T R I N E.

The Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, or Union with Christ, contains in it, all sorts of Spiritual Dainties, as a Sumptuous Feast, ready prepared, to which Sinners are invited.

Here I shall do (God assisting) Five Things.

1. Shew, *Why the Blessings of the Gospel, or Union with Christ, is compared to such a Feast.*

2. Shew you, *What those things are, that this marriage Feast doth consist of, which are said to be all ready; or, what that Denotes.*

3. Shew you, *The Nature of those things, of which this Feast doth consist.*

4. Shew, *What is meant by Coming, and what is required of them that come.*

5. Shew you, *Who they are, that may be said to come, and Eat of this Feast.*

1. The Blessings of the Gospel, or of Union with Christ, may be compared to a great Feast, a Marriage Feast.

I. From the Glorious Design or End of it. A Feast, a Noble Marriage Feast is prepared, upon an high Design, even the Marriage of the King's Son: Therefore the Provision of such

a Feast, such a Banquet, is prepared upon a high and great Design.

Consider, Was there ever a higher, a more glorious Design than this! What, The Marriage of the Son of God to poor Sinners! No Dinner, or Supper can be provided on any Occasion, equal to this. Every King, and Nobleman, prepares a Marriage Feast for his Son, according to his Greatness and high Grandeur, and the Magnificence of his Son. Now, Brethren, God is no petty Prince, but the great King of Heaven and Earth, to whom all Earthly Kings owe Subjection, and Homage. *Sirs!* All the mighty and chief Monarchs of this World, are but Subjects of this King; and *his Son* is Heir of All things, as well as *He is the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*: And all things are given into his Hand. Therefore, in respect of the Design of this Supper, it may be Compared to a Marriage Feast, yea, and the most Noblest and Glorious that ever was, viz.

Heb. i. 3.

To joyn Heaven and Earth together, the great Creator, and the undone Sinner; or, to bring Mankind into a lasting Union, and near Relation unto God.

II. A Feast, such a Marriage Feast, where Multitudes of poor Subjects, or rather Traitors and Rebels are Invited, Denotes the highest Bounty, Generosity, Mercy and Goodness, that a King can show, as to offer to Marry his own Son, to such a Person so unworthy of such Favour and Honour.

So, my Brethren, this Marriage of Christ the Son of God, to Sinners, holds forth Infinite Grace, Mercy, and rich Bounty, even to the Admiration of Men and Angels. What King did ever offer to Marry his own Son, to an Enemy, to a cursed Rebel, and Traitor, that had conspir'd to Dethrone him?

This Marriage-feast denotes the highest act of Grace, and rich bounty in God, that ever was shewn.

III. A King that makes a Marriage Feast for his own Son, thereby clearly shews, his Hearty Consent, it being made at his own Charge. So God the Father shews his Hearty Consent and Approbation, as to his Son's Espousing and Marrying of Sinners, since he (as you have heard) doth not only provide all things for this Feast, at his own Charge, but

The Father heartily consents to this Marriage.

N n n n n

also

The Souls Marriage with Christ the most Noble and Glorious design that ever was.

also sends his Servants to invite the Guests. The Love of the Son doth not exceed the Love of the Father.

Choice
Bread and
Wine at
this Feast.
Joh. 2. 2.
10.

IV. A Princely Marriage Feast consisteth not only of all choice of Meats, or rich Dainties to be Eat, but also of the choicest Wines to be Drunk. We read that at the Marriage Feast of *Cana in Galilee*, they had Wine, tho' the best was reserv'd unto the last. So, Brethren, at this Spiritual Banquet God hath provided in the Gospel, at the Marriage of his Son, are all things that are desireable to Eat, and that too in a plentiful manner; *There is Bread enough, and to Spare, in my Father's House*: But much more for the Marriage Day, and also the Finest and Best he hath. Jesus Christ, under the name of Wisdom, saith, *Eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine that I have mingled*. Alas, Sirs, you that are Unbelievers, never Eat of such Bread, nor Drunk of such Wine in all your Lives; *Why do you Labour for that which is not Bread*. That which cannot Feed and Satisfy your Soul. Here is Bread indeed, Meat indeed, Drink indeed; all sorts of Meat, such that suits with all Ranks, Degrees, Ages and Appetites of Men; as Babes, Young Men, and Fathers; *If any man Thirst, let him come to me, and Drink*.

Luk. 15. 17

Pro. 8. 9.

Isa. 55. 2.

Joh. 7. 37.
Cant. 1. 3.

There is
no want
of any
thing at
this Mar-
riage.

V. At the Marriage of an Earthly Prince, there is no Want of any thing that can be Desir'd, to Feed, to Delight, and to Satisfy all that Come. So in this Marriage Supper, there is no Want of any thing that the Soul needs: All things are here ready, the Best of the whole Kingdom may be expected to be had at the Marriage Feast of the King's Son. So, here is the best of Heaven, even all the choicest Rarities and Dainties, which are no where else to be had. A Table is here richly Spread, to the Astonishment of the holy Angels. Take a short View of those Rarities on which you are to Feed.

Choice
Varieties
at this
Marriage.
1 Cor. 2.
7, 8.

Eph. 3. 4.

1. Here we Feed by Faith on the Mystery of God's amazing Wisdom; his Wisdom in a Mystery, that was hid from Ages and Generations: *That hidden Wisdom that God ordained before the World, unto our Glory. Which none of the Princes of this World knew*. In another place it is called, *The Knowledge of Christ in a mystery; which in other Ages, was not made known unto the Sons of men, that the Gentiles should be Fellow-Heirs, of the same Body, and partakers of his Promise, in Christ by the Gospel*.

This is a choice Dish, here we Feed on that Infinite Wisdom of God, in the Contrivance of the Way of our Salvation by Jesus Christ, and of our Redemption thro' his Blood.

Here we see how God hath Defeated

the Devil in his Hellish Contrivance, in his Overthrowing and Ruining Mankind. And how God hath not only display'd in our Redemption, the Attribute of his Wisdom, but also the Glory of All his other blessed Attributes, and caused 'em to meet together in sweet Harmony.

2: Here we also Feed on the sweet Dish of God's Eternal Council, Purpose, and Decree, before the World began. His Cabinet Councils, (if I may so say, with Reverence) are here Opened at this Marriage Feast, before our Eyes; *Which from the beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ*. In which are so great and sublime Rarities, that the *Principalities and Powers in heavenly places*, greatly desire to Feed with you herein, as they are made known by the Church, *even the manifest Wisdom of God*. Tho' they are not concern'd in Marrying of Jesus Christ, (he not taking hold of the Nature of Angels) yet they are greatly affected with the secret Wisdom and Counsel of God, as it is here revealed.

3. Here also poor Sinners by Faith, may Feed on the infinite Love of God the Father, and on the Love of Jesus Christ, which passeth Knowledge.

4. Moreover, here they may Feed on the Antitype of all those *Jewish Feasts*, and *Legal Sacrifices*, which were under the Law: They had many Feasts which were Types of this Marriage Feast; they had the Shell, but we have the Kernel; they the Shadow, we the Substance.

5. Here Sinners may Feed on the true *Manna* that came down from Heaven, which far exceeds that which the Fathers Eat of in the Wilderness, and are Dead, *but he that eats of this Manna, shall live for ever*. Here also at this Marriage Supper you may Drink of the Anti-typical Water that came out of the *Rock*, which is of admirable Vertue, and Sweet to the Taste.

6. Here Sinners may Feed on those precious Dainties, which Kings, and Good Men of Old, Long'd for, but it was Deny'd them in that manner as we in Gospel-days have it: They saw Christ's Day but darkly. They beheld this Marriage Supper afar off, as it is Solemnized in these Days, it was Prophesied as a thing to come, *In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make a Feast, &c.*

7. The King hath now, as it were opened his Princely Closet of his choicest Rarities, and brings forth all his delicate Sweet-meats, and bids us Eat. Jesus Christ takes now his Spouse into his Banqueting House; *This is the day of the gladness of his Heart*. Here we sit with the King, and behold him in his Galleries, and are Imbraced in his Arms, whilst we are Ravish'd with his Love.

8. Here

Eph. 3. 9.
10.

Kings and
Righteous
Men desi-
red to see
this Mar-
riage feast

Isa. 25. 6.

The Kings
Closet o-
pened.

Union and Communion tasted at this Marriage Feast. Wine of Consolation at this Supper.

8. Here we Feed on the Blessings of Union and Communion, with the Father, and the Son, and have the Fellowship of the Spirit, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

9. Here we Drink of the Wine of Consolation, which those who taste of, soon forget their Sorrows. Here we Eat the Bread of Reconciliation, and Drink the Wine of Free Justification, and Adoption. Here we Feed on the sweet Meat of Pardon of Sin, all past, present, and to come; and on Peace of Conscience, which is a continual Feast.

The faint Joys are of the same quality as those in Heaven.

10. Here Sinners may Taste of those heavenly Dainties, which the glorified Saints partake of in abundance, in the Celestial Paradise; tho' our Vessels can take in but a little of it, tho' theirs are enlarged, yet Believers here, partake of the same Joys, the same in Quality, tho' not as to Degree, or Quantity. This, my Brethren, is that *Feast of Fat things, a Feast of Wine upon the Lees, of fat things, full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees, well refined.*

Isa. 25. 6.

Mr. Pool.

This Feast, saith our late *Annotator*, is made up with the most exquisite Delicate Provisions, which are manifestly meant of the Ordinances, Graces, and Comforts, given by the Lord to his Saints.

11. As this Marriage Feast consists of the most choicest Rarities, and Varieties of Heaven, so it is also all Free. It is free to Sinners, free to the Receivers, but Costly to the Provider and Founder of it. It cost the Father dear, and the Son dear; but all that are Bid and Invited, are not to Pay one Farthing for any thing. Sometimes People that come to a Feast, are Sumptuously Entertain'd, but yet may not know what Bill may be brought 'em; but when the Master of the Feast says, *Gentlemen, You are all heartily Welcome, but here is not a Farthing to Pay*: This makes them Cheerful. Even so it is here, God bids all that come to this Feast, *Welcome*; but it is all of his own free Grace; *Wine and milk without Money &c.* A poor Sinner may say with *Peter and John*, *Silver and Gold have I none*: Yet he may come to this Wedding, and Eat freely. Oh, what a Dishonour indeed would it be to a King, that bids you to the Marriage Feast of his Son, should any of you bring something of your own, and set it upon his Table, in the midst of his Dainties! How would he Frown upon you, should you do this, and say, *Who brought this hither*? Am I not able to Entertain you with my own, but you must bring your paltry Stuff? Let those who are Tainted with the Errors of *Arminianism*, or *Baxterianism*, think of this, who strive to mix the King's Wine with their *muddy Water*, or mix their polluted

Works with God's Free Grace. How doth he Loathe their Notions of Free Will, and their own Righteousness! Do they think to be the more Welcome at this Wedding, because, forsooth, they would, through the Pride of their base Hearts, Help God, and bear some part of the Charge of this Feast? As if the almighty *Jehovah*, was not Rich, or Able enough, to do all Himself alone! Oh, how fain would sorry Man have somewhat to Boast of, and Glory in, of their own, and God not have the whole Honour of our Salvation!

VI. A Wedding Dinner of a Prince is prepared in the King's own House, in his Palace; so this Feast is prepared and made in God's *Holy Mountain*, in his Church; *Sion is God's Habitation*, it is the King's Palace, *In Salem is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion*; --- *This is my dwelling-place for ever, here will I dwell.* Thither, Sinners, you must go, thither you are Invited, if you would Eat of this Supper; *In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all things, a Feast of fat things &c.*

This Marriage-feast is made in Sion. Psal. 76. 2. Psal. 132. 14.

Isa. 25. 6.

The Church, Beloved, is Christ's Banqueting House, or his House of Wine; *He hath made us sit down together in Heavenly Places, in Christ Jesus.* Do you, Sinners, think to Feed with the Saints, and Eat of this Supper, whilst you remain without? This Marriage is not kept abroad in the Market-place, in the open Air of this World: You must not expect any Choice Entertainment by the King, if you come not to Court. True, some that come to the Door only, may, perhaps, have a small Morsel from the King's Table; so some Sinners, that never come up to God's Terms to Espouse Christ, have the Ministry of the Word; they may taste of that, tho' they Feed not freely on it, nor of Christ in it. I do not say, none can Feed on this Feast, but such that are of this, or that particular Church; but, however, they must be Members of the Mystical Church, of the Universal Church. But they that are Convinced, it is their indispensable Duty, to joyn with the Visible Church, and have an Opportunity so to do, it may be fear'd, if they Sin against Light and Conscience, whether they shall ever Taste of the King's Supper.

VII. A Marriage Feast is prepared for such that are *Invited*; and a King is at Liberty to Bid or Invite whom he pleaseth; all is at his own Sovereign Pleasure. Is he Bound to Bid all that dwell in his Dominions? No, surely; if any of you make a Marriage Feast for Son or Daughter, you are at Liberty whom you will Invite; nor can any justly Censure you, because you do not Invite

All are not called or bid to this Feast.

Invite all that dwell in your Parish. So it is here, in this respect, no Man Treats himself, Invites himself, but it is God's Prerogative to Bid whomsoever he pleaseth, tho many that are Invited, do not, will not come; yet none can come but such that are called by the Gospel: True, *many are Called, but few are Chosen*: But God doth not Call all Nations, all the World have not the Gospel Preached to them; no, many dark Regions of the Earth never heard the joyful Sound: Though we hear it in *England*, few ever heard it in *India*; the *Antichristian* World, the *Mahometan* World, and the *Pagan* World have it not, and, is God therefore Unjust? God forbid: Is he deprived of that Liberty of his own Will, which, in such a Case, none can deny unto Man? May not God Act from his own Sovereignty, and do what he Pleaseth? *Is it not Lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* And, tho God is pleased to afford the Gospel to *England*, yet All in this Nation are not Invited, no, not All of this City, of this and that Town, or Parish, nor All of this or that Family: See what God says, *I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and bring you to Sion.* He Call'd and Invited *Abraham* of Old, but left the rest of his Kindred and Father's House in gross Idolatry. Was he Unjust, to Choose the Nation of the *Jews*, and leave all the *Gentile* Nations in Blindness? Oh, that these things were well Consider'd! Brethren, God might have refused to send his Son to Espouse one of *Adam's* Race; he might justly have suffer'd all to Perish in their Sins: *I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

VIII. A Marriage Feast denotes a Time of Joy and Mirth. If Musick and Merriment be ever Lawful to be us'd, it is at a Wedding.

So this Marriage Feast doth hold forth a Time of greatest Joy to Sinners. Should a Prince Court a poor Virgin, and set the Marriage Day, and Invite her to Court, to be taken into his Embraces, would not this fill her full of Joy? So nothing can more Chear and Rejoyce the Hearts of lost Sinners, than the News that Jesus Christ is fallen in Love with them, and has appointed the Marriage Day, and has also provided a Marriage Feast, and Invited them to Come and Accept of his Love, and most gracious Purpose to Espouse them unto himself; *Thou shalt rejoyce in thy Feasts, thou, and thy Sons and thy Daughters, &c.* What was the Feast of the Tabernacle a Type of, but this Marriage Feast? It is said, when *Philip* came down to the City of *Samaria*, and Preached Christ to

them, and they Believed, *there was great Joy in that City*, and great Cause for it! *Act. 8. 8.* What, be Espoused to Christ! Be freely Justified by God's Grace! Have all their Sins Pardoned, and not see cause of Joy, and of Singing God's Praises!

IX. At a Marriage Feast of a Prince, there are Waiters who are Persons of Honour, call'd, *maids of Honour*: So here *Wisdom has killed her Beasts, mingled her Wine, and sent forth her maidens*; which are the Ministers of the Gospel, who are Waiters, or such that attend at this Marriage Feast, *who are to give to every one his Portion of meat in due season.* The Queen of *Sheba* was wonderfully taken with the Sitting and Attendance of *Solomon's* Servants; Noble Persons, especially Kings, have Noble Attendance. *Solomon* was a Type of Christ, and the Order of his House, and Attendance of his Servants amaz'd the Q. of *Sheba*. But besides the Ministers of the Gospel, the Holy Angels attend on the Bride and Bridegroom: *They administer unto them that are Heirs of eternal Salvation.* This shews the great Honour Christ doth vouchsafe unto his Saints. What are the Ministers of Christ on Earth, to those blessed Angels of Heaven, who he Commands to Wait upon, and Minister to his People here.

X. Sometimes, perhaps, at a Marriage Feast, all that are Invited, will not Come, and, for their Neglect, others are sent to, who were not at first Invited.

So it is here, the *Jews* were first Invited to this Marriage Supper, but they refused to Come; and we poor *Gentiles* were then sent to, and are graciously Invited; we, who lay in the Highways, and under Hedges, that we may partake of their Leavings, and Sup with Christ.

Application.

1. I Infer, That God is exceeding Good and Gracious to Sinners, it is beyond all the Conceptions of our Hearts, and Expressions of our Lips. Let all in Heaven and Earth stand and Wonder that such a Banquet should be prepared, and such Invitations vouchsafed, to Vile and Ungodly Ones.

Exhortation.

2. O blefs God for this Supper, and for such large Provision prepared! What Encouragement is here for All to Come! Here is Enough, *Come who will.* But to proceed,

I shall shew you what a Feast it is. This is my next great Work.

1. Brethren, This is a great and large Feast; here is Provision for Multitudes, the Quantity is great, consisting of many costly

Many Nations are ignorant of this Supper, and not called to it.

Mat. 20. 15.

Jer. 3. 14.

Rom. 9. 14.

Great Joy at this Marriage-Feast.

Deut. 16. 4.

The waiters at this Feast, who. Pro. 9. 2. 3

Luk. 12. 42.

1 King. 10. 5.

Heb. 1. 14

'Tis a great feast.

costly Dishes; here is all; Who can understand the Loving Kindness of the Lord? *Hast thou entered into the Springs of the Sea? Or, Hast thou walked in the search of the Depth? Who can number the Clouds in Wisdom?* Stand and Wonder!

Job 38.
18. 37.

It is a
costly
Feast.

Job. 28.
16, 17, 18,
19.

It is a no-
ble, a glo-
rious, and
magnifi-
cent Feast.

It is an
heavenly
Feast.

It is a
love Feast

It is a my-
sterious
Feast.

2. It is a costly Banquet; the Life of the Bridegroom went to Purchase the Food and Provision of this Feast; *Sirs! Gold and Silver cannot Purchase the least Morsel of this Banquet: It may be said of it, as Job speaks of Wisdom, It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the Price thereof; it cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the Precious Onyx, or the Sapphire; the Gold and the Chrystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for Jewels of fine Gold.*

3. 'Tis a Noble Feast, a most Honourable Banquet, a most Magnificent Stately Supper, on the Marriage of the Mighty King, the Royal Heir of both Worlds: Here Earth is Married to the Noble Line and Offspring of Heaven: 'Tis therefore a most Glorious Feast, the Design of it is a most Glorious Design, (as you have heard) proceeding from a most Glorious Cause, and it is attended with the like Glorious Effects.

4. It is an Heavenly Feast, the Food of which it consisteth is Heavenly; the Bread Eaten here came from Heaven, the Subject it Feeds is Heavenly, *viz.* the Soul of Man; and the Nourishment such receive that Feed upon it, is Heavenly Nourishment; the Company that here Set and Eat together, are all Heavenly, being Born from above; the Musick that is at this Banquet, is Heavenly Musick, Heavenly Songs, Sung with Heavenly and Gracious Hearts.

5. It is a Love Feast, or a Feast made wholly up of Love, Eternal Love was the Spring of it; the Rise and Cause of it was Love: The Design and Purport of it is, to manifest Love, Infinite Love, Sweet and Eternal Love, Soul-enriching, Soul-delighting, Soul-satisfying and Soul-exalting Love; here the Rich Feed the Poor, the *Rich Creator* Feeds the poor Lost, and *Undone Creature*; the Rich Saviour Feeds the Miserable, and Wretched Sinner.

6. It is a Mysteries Feast; such a Feast as to what is meant, and held forth by it, very few understand; for all that come to Eat and Feed at other Marriage Feasts, do not Marry the Bridegroom, nor doth Eating of those Dainties produce such an Effect as Union, in Bonds of nearest Affinity with the Lord, and Master of the Feast: But all that come to this Marriage Feast, and Eat of this Food, are thereby United, or Espoused to Jesus Christ; for what is it to Eat of this Provision, but to Believe, or receive Jesus

Christ by Faith, by which Means, thro' the Spirit, they all are immediately Espoused to the Lord Jesus.

7. It is a Wonderful, a Full, an Incomparable Feast: *Solomon's Provision for his Table*, was nothing unto this; no Feast that ever was made by any King, was any thing to this; yet *Solomon's Provision for one Day* amounted to a large Bill, *viz. Thirty Measures of fine Flower, and Threescore Measures of Meal, Ten fat Oxen, and Twenty Oxen out of the Pastures, and an Hundred Sheep, besides Harts, and Roe-bucks, and fallow Deer, and fatted Fowl.* But, alas! The Supper of this King, *i. e.* the Great God, is far Richer, and more abundant Store, more in Quantity, and Richer far in Quality: The Lamb that is ready Slain, and prepared to be Eaten at this Feast, is more in Worth and Value, than Ten Thousand Feasts, and every thing that can be contained in them, that ever was, or can be made by Mortals; nay, Worth more than Ten Thousand Worlds: The Water that is here Drank at this Wedding, one Drop of it is better than Ten Thousand Tuns of the rarest Wine that ever was provided at any other Feasts: It is the Water of Life, all such that Drink of it shall never Die; *Whosoever Drinketh of the Water that I shall give him, shall never Thirst; but the Water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into Eternal Life.*

It is an in-
compara-
ble Feast
for Rich-
ness, &c.

1 King 4:
22, 23.

Joh. 4. 14

Joh. 6. 33.

Joh. 6. 35

The Bread at this Feast came down from Heaven, *The Bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World.* Bread of Life, Spiritual Bread, Heavenly Bread, or true Bread from Heaven, *He that Eateth thereof shall never Hunger.*

At this Feast we Eat of the *hidden Manna* of Election, and of the Sweet-Meats of Spiritual Knowledge, and divine and saving Illuminations, and feed on the Marrow of Justification, and Pardon of Sin, and on the Honey-comb of Free-grace, and Drink of those Consolations that are in Christ, and the Fellowship of the Spirit, and Bowels of Mercy, on the Comforts of Love, on the choice Rarity of a lively Hope, and Taste of the Oyl of Joy, Peace of Conscience, and the Fat of Ordinances, and the sweetness of the Promises, and Blessings of the Word, that is *Sweeter than Honey, or the Honey-comb; better than Gold, yea than much fine Gold.* Here we are stayed with Flagons, and comforted with Apples, being Sick of Love.

Here we Eat of the Rarities of the Covenant of Grace, and are delighted with the Effects and Fruits of Saving-Faith, and may Taste of the Blessings of Assurance.

Now put all these together, and then say, this is a Marriage Feast indeed; Oh, Who would not come unto it, that are Invited! Oh, know ye poor Sinners (that hear me this Day) you are some of them; you are again bid to this Marriage; What are your Resolutions? Will you come? Do you think these things are but Stories? Or are you persuaded of the Truth and Reality of them? How

then can you refuse to Embrace Jesus Christ?

Consolation.

Oh! and what is the Happiness of all those that are come, and do partake of this Supper! Let such be Thankful, and Live answerable to such Privileges: *But no more at this time.*

S E R M O N XI.

M A T H. XXII. 4. L U K. XIV. 17.

Come, for all things are now ready.

Feb. 14.
1697.

THE Last Day I Closed with the Second General Head. I have shewed, *What a kind of Feast this Marriage Feast is.* I shall proceed to the next thing.

Thirdly, I shall shew you, What is meant by all things being now Ready. And,

1. What these Words do Imply, *All things are now Ready.*

2. Shew you, What these things are, that are now Ready.

What is
meant by
all things
being ready.

I. These Words *now Ready* do Imply, That the Sinner that is Invited, is not to bring any thing with him to this Wedding, to entertain himself; no Morfel of his own, nothing is required of him, unless it be an Hungry Stomach, or a Thirsty Soul; *If any Man Thirst, let him come to me and Drink.*

Joh. 7.36.
37.

Object. Some perhaps may say, *Is he not to bring a Wedding-Garment with him?*

Answer. No Person will be Entertained without a Wedding-Garment; but that is not of the Sinners own providing, nor can he prepare it, he hath nothing to make it of; the Wedding Garment is a very Rich Robe, (as you will hear hereafter) but all a Man's own Righteousness is not worth One Farthing in God's Account, being compared to *Filthy Rags*: The Wedding Garment is, my Brethren, given to those that come and Eat of this Marriage Supper; and it is among those things that *are Ready*, and it is one of the first things that the Sinner that comes ought to look after, and if he hath it not, there will be no Room for him at this Wedding.

II. These Words, *All things are now Ready*, do Imply, That all the Provision of this Marriage Feast, is of God's providing; and that all is of his own Free-Grace, through Jesus Christ; *All things are of God, who hath Reconciled us unto himself, by Jesus Christ, &c. By Grace ye are Saved.*

2 Cor. 5.
18.
Eph. 2. 8.

III. These Words do Imply, That all things that concern our Salvation and Justification, are all *Ready* purchased, provided, and prepared for us: The Lamb of God is not now to be Slain, but he is already Slain; Satisfaction is not to be made to God's Justice by any thing, Jesus Christ is to do in, or for the Sinner that is Invited; No, but Justice is already Satisfied, and Sin is Expiated already by Jesus Christ.

Heb. 9.26.
28. cap.
10. 10.

A Robe of Righteousness is not to be prepared, or wrought by the Spirit of God, (much less not by the Sinner himself) but that this Robe of Righteousness is by Jesus Christ wrought out for us, by his Active and Passive Obedience, and it is ready to be put upon every Sinner that comes to this Wedding.

If, Brethren, [Faith] was this Wedding Garment, either as a Sacred Habit, or Grace of the Spirit in the Soul, or as the Act of the Soul, then it could not be said, that *all things are now Ready*; because the Words Denote, That all the Provision is made for us without us, not within us; that Righteousness by which Sinners are Justified at God's Bar, is not a Righteousness wrought in them, but without them, in the Person of Christ, and it is put upon all that do Believe in Christ, whose Obedience is the Meritorious, and the Material Cause of our Justification, he has done all, in the respect of our Justification the Robe is made, although the Holy Spirit has not done all his Work as to the Application of Christ's Righteousness, Blood, and Merits, to poor Sinners, yet the Holy Spirit is ready to Inlighten, to Quicken, to Regenerate.

IV. These Words, *Now Ready*, may respect the Clearness and Fullness of the Gospel Provision, and Revelation of it above the Law, *The Law made nothing Perfect*, but the Gospel doth; now

Heb. 7.19.

now we need no higher, no other, or clearer Revelation or Discovery of God, Christ, and Salvation: The Law shadowed forth (in its Types and Ceremonies) the Gospel, but all things then were not fully ready, to be presented to our open View, as in the Gospel they are.

V. *Now Ready* may Denote, they were not so ready until now; and they are so ready now, that God seems to wait for his Guests; and Christ hath now no more to do, but to receive and embrace, and bid all Welcome, that come to this Marriage; and they therefore carry in sharp Reproof to all that make not haste to come to this Wedding: Shall God's Costly Supper be quite ready, and Christ the Bridegroom stay for us, and we not hasten away!

Lastly, 'Tis a strong Motive to Sinners to come away, 'tis Supper-time, and *All things are quite Ready*.

Secondly. I shall shew you, (how) *What those things are which are now Ready*.

1. Here is the Mighty God, who was greatly Offended, and full of Wrath, ready Pacified and Reconciled in Christ, to all that come to this Wedding; *Fury is not in me*: Fury was in him, but in Christ it is put away; *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*; *For if, when we were Enemies, we were Reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son, &c.*

The reconciling Sacrifice is Offered, that Attoned for our Offences, yet none but they that Believe receive the Attonement.

The Price is Paid, but the Captive may not presently be Discharged, his Fetters may not be knockt off, Christ's Blood may not yet be Applied, but it shall be to all them for whom he Died.

2. The blessed God and Father is ready to receive all that come to this Marriage Supper; he stands ready with his Arms spread open to Embrace them, and bid them Welcome, let them be never such Sinners, Profuse Prodigals, that have wasted all their Substance on Harlots; Sirs, were not Sinners besides themselves, sure they would haste away, to this Marriage Supper, or arise and go with the Prodigal to their Father; 'tis said, *And when he came to himself he said, How many hired Servants of my Father's have Bread enough, and to spare, and I Perish with Hunger: I will arise and go to my Father*. Well, and will his Father receive him, shall he be Entertained that hath thus Sinned, thus Offended? Yea, his Father no sooner saw him, tho' he was *afar off*, but he *had Compassion, and ran to meet him*.

By the Father of this Prodigal, the

Great God is meant, and by the Prodigal an Ungodly Sinner, one that has been most Prophane, and abominable Wicked. God doth not stand ready only to receive a returning Sinner, until he come Home, but he runs to meet him; indeed, he knows that there are such Obstructions, or Obstacles in the way, that they cannot come to Jesus Christ, unless he draws them, unless he helps them, or brings them, by the Power and Influences of his Spirit. But, O see how ready God is to Embrace returning Sinners! The Father *fell on the Neck of his Prodigal Son, and Kissed him*. Tho' your Sins be as *Red as Scarlet, as Red as Crimson*; tho' you have *done as many evil things as you could*, yet if you come to Christ, the Father stands ready to bid you Welcome.

3. Jesus Christ is also ready to Embrace all poor Sinners that come to him, or that come to this Marriage Supper: He stands waiting, looking out, (as it were) to see who comes unto him, that he may manifest himself, in all his Perfections, and Personal Excellencies, to them, in the Ministration of the Gospel; saying unto them, *Behold me, behold me; look unto me and be ye Saved, all the ends of the Earth*.

Jesus Christ stands ready waiting, having all his Glorious Wedding Robes on, being every way Deckt as a Bridegroom for the Bride; and says, *Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are Heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*: They, and they only that Believe in Christ, that come to Christ, do *enter into rest*. Christ is the only Rest for the Soul; there is Rest from the Labour and sore Bondage of the Law; in him is Rest also from the Guilt of Sin, and from the Fear of Wrath, and Divine Vengeance, the Punishment of Sin; and Jesus Christ is ready to give this Rest to all that Believe in him, or that come to this Wedding Supper; *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and he that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out*.

4. And, as I have hinted, here is also a Wedding-Garment ready, it is wrought by Jesus Christ; he made it; it is not to be made or spun out of our Bowels; the Sinner hath no Stuff, no Materials to make this Garment of; it is, Brethren, a Robe that is compared to Cloth of Gold, *Upon the Right-hand did stand the Queen, in Gold of Ophir*; it is made of the choicest Gold; it is said, *her Cloathing is wrought Gold*; this is not that Glory that is within her, but it is a Robe put upon her. True, *The King's Daughter is all Glorious within*. This, no doubt, refers to the Graces of the

See the Parable of the Prodigal opened.

Luk. 15. 20.

Jer. 3. 5.

Jesus Christ stands ready to receive all that come to the Marriage.

Isa. 65. 1. Isa. 45. 22.

Mat. 11. 28.

Joh. 6. 37.

The Wedding-garment is ready.

Psal. 45. 9. See the Parable of the Prodigal-Son opened. Book II. Vers. 13.

the Spirit, and to her inward Holiness, or the Righteousness of Sanctification that is within, or Inherent; but *her Cloathing*, that is prepared for her without, and put upon her, *is wrought Gold*: The Matter of this Garment (saith a Divine) was prepared by the Father, the First Person of the Trinity: The Son he wrought it, he made the Garment, by his perfect Obedience to the Law of God, and Suffering the Penalty thereof in our Room; and the Holy Ghost puts it upon the Soul, he applies Christ's Merits; he unites us to Christ, and works Faith in us, and so puts this Glorious Robe on our Souls.

But, Pray Brethren, see, I beseech you, to take care rightly to distinguish, between the Garment of Justification, and that of Sanctification; many confound these Two together, and so strive to mix our Inherent Righteousness in our Justification, with the Righteousness of Christ: This was that Error that Mr. Baxter led the People into (though I hope he was a good Man, God might open his Eyes before he Dyed.) 'Tis, Sirs, a dangerous thing to adhere to such a Notion; this is to make our Justification to be partly by Works, and partly by Grace. I tell you once again, All Works of Righteousness, either done by us, or wrought in us, are utterly excluded in our free Justification. O! How do I long to see you all well Established in this great Fundamental Truth of the Gospel! *If it be by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace; but if it be of Works, then it is no more of Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work.* Our Justification in the sight of God, is as much of Free-grace, as is our Election and Effectual Calling: *He that Worketh not, but Believeth on him that Justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness, ---- In the Lord, shall one say, have I Righteousness and Strength; not in our selves, but in the Lord; Who of God is made unto us, Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption:* This is the Wedding Garment that is ready. Do not think you must bring this Robe along with you, that come to this Marriage Supper: No, no, all our Righteousness is but as Dung, compared to this Righteousness: *He made him Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.*

A Physician to heal Sinners.

VI. Here is Christ as a skilful and able Physician, ready to heal all your Wounds, and Sickness of your Souls; He that is our Bridegroom to Espouse us, is our Physician (I told you) to Heal us. Sirs, you must not think to get rid of your Sins, or cured of your Sores, before you come to Christ; you

must come to him as Sinners; *The whole* Mat. 9. 12. *need not a Physician, but they that are Sick: Nothing can heal our Wounds, but the Blood of our Physician, applied by Faith to our Souls.*

Sinners, when they first come to Christ, are Wounded in every part and faculty of their Souls; *From the Crown of their Heads to the Soles of their Feet, there is nothing but Wounds, Bruises, and putrifying Sores:* But he stands ready to heal all that come to this Marriage Feast.

1. He Heals the Plague of a hard Heart; he breaks this, and none but he can break the Heart of Stone, and take it away; *I will take the Stone out of your Flesh, and will give you a heart of Flesh.* What diseases Christ cures.

2. He it is that Heads our stubborn and obstinate Wills; *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have Life.* 'Tis Christ that bows and subjects the Rebellious Will; *My People shall be willing in the Day of my Power.* Joh. 5. 40. Psal. 110. 3.

3. He Cures us of that great Blindness of our Understanding; it is he that hath the Eye-salve, to open their Eyes that were Born Blind, and none but he; *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that thou may'st be Rich, and white Raiment, that thou may'st be Cloathed, that the shame of thy Nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine Eyes with Eye-salve, that thou may'st see.* He is appointed of God to open Blind Eyes; all Men are Born Blind, spiritually Blind, and no Man can see till Christ opens their Eyes. Rev. 3. 18.

4. 'Tis he that must Cure the Soul of that Tympany of Pride; Man naturally is Conceited, and very Proud and Rich in his own Fancy; but Jesus Christ shews him his Poverty and Wretchedness, and brings him to his Feet, even to Cloath himself.

5. Christ Cures our Souls of that Carnality that is in our Affections; Mankind naturally have their Hearts set upon earthly things, and Objects.

6. Here is a Fountain ready to wash the poor polluted Sinner, from all its Filthiness: You must not think you are to wash your selves from your Pollution, and then come to Christ, then come to this Marriage Supper, then Espouse Christ; as if you thought he would not accept you, receive you, espouse you, in your Blood and Filth. O take heed, for the Lord's sake, of this. You are not first Washed, and then Believe, then come to Christ, or Espouse him: Pray see what he says by the Prophet Ezekiel, *And when I passed by, and saw thee polluted in thy own Blood, I said to thee, Live. Yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of Love, and I spread my Skirt over thee, and covered thy Nakedness: That is, I cast upon* A Fountain ready to wash in. Ezek. cap. 16. vers. 6. 8.

upon thee, my Robe of Righteousness : *Yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.* Christ first saw us polluted in our Blood, and Dyed for us. Again he looked upon us, to call us to this Marriage Feast; this was also the time of his Love, when we lay in our Sins, and were Originally and Actually Defiled and Polluted, and when we were in this Condition, he Swore to us, and entered into a Conjugal Covenant with us, or was pleased then to Espouse us, and make us his own; and now see what follows, *Then I washed thee with Water, yea I thoroughly washed away thy Blood from thee, and I anointed thee with fresh Oyl.* This refers to the Sanctifying Vertue of the Holy Spirit; the Sinner is not to wash himself first, and then come to Christ, but to come to Christ that he may be washed. Sanctification doth not preceed our Union with Christ, but follows, (it is an Effect thereof) at least in order of Nature, tho not in order of Time.

Ezek. 16: 9.

The Holy Ghost is ready to quicken Dead Sinners, &c.

VII. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is ready to discharge his Office, to all Sinners, who are made willing to come to this Marriage, or are Chosen Ones. His Work is to Quicken, or to Infuse a Vital Principle into the Soul; no Sinner can come until this is done, where there is no Life, there can be no Motion.

The Work of the Spirit is, to Enlighten, to Renew, or Regenerate the Soul; and all this the Holy Spirit is ready to do, for all those that God hath Chosen and Called to this Wedding.

Adoption is ready to be conferred on all that come to Christ. Gal. 4. 6. Joh. 1. 12.

VIII. Free-Grace in God, is ready to Adopt all for Sons and Daughters who come; *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying Abba Father.* This ariseth from the Favour of God: *To as many as receive him, to them gave he Power (or Priviledges) to become the Sons of God, even to as many that Believe on his Name:* Such are no more Servants, but Sons.

Bread and Water of Life is ready.

IX. Here is a Lamb ready Slain, and Prepared, as choice Food for the Soul to feed upon, with Bread and Water of Life, and all other Spiritual Varieties, suitable for such a Marriage Supper.

Spiritual Musick is ready.

X. Here is the great Master of Spiritual Musick ready, to Rejoyce and Chear all the Guests that come to this Wedding.

Luk. 15. 24, 25.

The Holy Ghost fills the Heart with Grace and Peace, Peace with God, and Peace of Conscience, and Joy in Believing; *And they began to be Merry: Now the Elder Son was in the Field, and as he came, and drew nigh to the House, he heard Musick and Dancing.*

Ornaments of Grace ready.

XI. Here is an Ornament of Grace ready, like a Crown unto thy Head, and Chains,

beyond Gold, to put *about thy Neck*, and a Ring ready to put upon thy Finger, with this Motto, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Every Soul that Espouseth Jesus Christ, is very richly Adorned in the inward Man, with the Graces of the Holy Spirit.

XII. Here is Pardon ready, under the Broad-Seal of Heaven. Pardon! perhaps some may say, How Large and Extensive is it? Is it a Pardon of all my Sins, that ever I have committed against God? and not only a Pardon of all that are past, but is it a Pardon of all to come also?

Pardon of Sin is ready.

I Answer. It is a Pardon of all Sins past, present, and to come, as to that Vindictive Wrath that is due to them; altho perhaps the Soul may not see it quickly, or have the feeling Comfort of it in his own Conscience: Nay, God may, for present and future Sins, be Displeased and Offended, and as a tender Father may Correct the Child he Loves, yet he will not disown, nor turn his Child out of his House, nor remove his Loving-Kindness from it: I mean, there cannot be a Breach made on our Justification, God's Covenant of Peace he will not break, Union with Christ cannot be lost: *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* If all Sins, present and to come, of Believers, as to Vindictive Wrath, were not Forgiven, then there might be Condemnation due to them that are in Christ Jesus; for that Sin that is not Forgiven; as touching that Just Wrath and Divine Vengeance that is the Demerit of it, binds the Soul under Eternal Condemnation; but such *That Believe in Christ, shall not come into Condemnation, but are passed from Death to Life:* That is, They are passed out of a State of Spiritual Death and Condemnation, and are always in a State of Eternal Life, and shall at last pass into it actually: *For by one Offering he hath Perfected for ever them that are Sanctified.*

Psal. 89. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

Rom. 8. 1

Joh. 5. 24.

Heb. 10. 14.

XIII. Here is a Cup of Strong Consolation ready, enough to Ravish the Souls of all that Espouse the Son of God, or rather that are Espoused by him; God having passed both his Word and Oath to confirm his Covenant, even Salvation to all his Seed; *Wherein, God willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Council, confirmed it by an Oath; That by two Immutable Things, in which it is impossible for God to Lye, we might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold upon the Hope set before us.*

Strong Consolation ready in Christ.

Heb. 6. 17, 18.

This is enough to chear our drooping Spirits to the full, and to vanquish all Doubts and Fears for Ever. God can as soon Lye, or be Guilty of Perjury, P p p p p (which

(which is the highest Blasphemy to say) as that one Believer shall eternally be Lost, or Perish for Ever. Sure such who refuse to come to Christ, esteem the Consolations of God to be but small, and the reason of it is, because the Consolations and Comforts of this World, are great with them; they Value Earth above Heaven, and the Pleasures of Sin more than Joy in the Holy Ghost.

Christ's
Ministers
ready to
Watch o-
ver the
Saints.

Acts 20.
20.

Verf. 27.

Angels
ready to
guard and
defend
the Saints.

Heb. 1. 14.

Pfal. 34.
91.

Ordinan-
ces are
ready.

Act. 2. 41.

Acts 22.
16.

Acts 8. 17.
Chap. 19.
6.
Heb. 6. 2.

XIV. Here are the Servants of Christ ready: I mean, His Ministers, to give them that come the Right-hand of Fellowship, and to break the Bread of Life unto them; yea, *To give every one his Portion of Meat in due Season.* They will with-hold nothing from them, that their Great Master hath appointed for them; *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and taught you publickly, and from house to house.* Again he saith, *For I have not shunned to declare unto you, all the Counsel of God.* Ministers are ready to Watch for their Souls.

XV. Nay, my Brethren, Here are the Angels of God ready also, to Conduct them, to Guard them, to Defend them, and to Minister to all that shall be, or are Heirs of Eternal Life. They are, saith Reverend Bifield, *Appointed as special Attendants about Christ, as the Messiah; and they serve also as Ministering Spirits, to keep and attend upon the Elect; in Life they defend and keep them, as a strong Guard about them, and Plague their Enemies: And in Death, they are about them, and carry their Souls to heaven, as they did the Soul of Lazarus.* The Bridegroom doth readily vouchsafe his own Guard, his own Retinue, his *Glorious Courtiers*, to be a Guard and Retinue to his Bride, and to every Soul he doth Espouse.

XVI. Here are Ordinances also ready, *i.e.* Holy Baptism ready, that so you may have Communion with the Lord Jesus, (in a lively Symbal) of his Death, Burial, and Resurrection, which you ought to receive, as a Pledge of the Remission of all your Sins, and to shew, that all your Iniquities are washed away in his Blood, and Buried in his Grave, and hereby also you come to be let into his Church, and in a regular way admitted to his Holy Table: *Then they that gladly received the Word were Baptized, and the same Day there were added unto them about Three Thousand Souls.* Baptism is ready always to him that comes to Christ, that Believes in Christ; and it is a great Sin then, for such to neglect it; *And now arise, Why tarriest thou? and be Baptized,* said Ananias to Paul.

XVII. Here is also *Imposition of hands* ready, that so you may receive a further Measure of the Promised Spirit,

which is made to all them that Love Christ, and keep his Commandments, to the end you may be Confirmed and Established in the Truth, and receive the *Earnest* of the Spirit, and the *Seal* and *Comforts* thereof, to your own Souls. Eph. 1. 13, 14. Chap. 4. 30.

XVIII. Here is a Place ready for you that come in the House of God: I say, A Place in the Church is ready for you: Holy David greatly Valued this Privilege, it was that one thing which he Desired; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the Days of my Life.* Psal. 27. 4.

Certainly this is a Glorious Privilege, is it not esteemed a high Honour to dwell always in the King's Palace, in his Courts, nay to dwell with the King in his own House, and Dwelling-place: *Beautiful for Scituation, the Joy of the whole Earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the North is the City of the great King. God is known in her Palaces for a Refuge.* Again saith the Psalmist, *The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation: This is my Rest for Ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Again he saith, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.* None have any Right to dwell in the Gospel Church, but Believers only, none but the true Spiritual Seed of Abraham. The Bond-Woman, and her Seed, *i.e.* the Fleishly Seed, (as such) are cast out in this, there is a difference between the Legal, and the Gospel-Church; *Cast out the bond Woman and her Son.* Gal. 4. 30.

XIX. There are Mansions in Heaven also ready for your Souls, when you Dye: Every one that comes to this Wedding, ought to be told of this, Christ hath prepared, and made ready Dwelling-places for them above; *In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a Place for you.* The poorest Saint here, that Lives in the meanest Cottage on Earth, hath a Glorious House prepared for him in Heaven: *For we know, that if our Earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* Joh. 14. 2. 2 Cor. 5. 1.

XX: There is a Glorious Kingdom ready, every Believer is Born an Heir to a Kingdom, and when they come to Age, they shall Possess it: The poorest Saint is an Heir of a Kingdom: *Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the Poor of this World Rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that Love him.* Oh! how Rich is Christ, the Bridegroom of our Souls! He hath a Kingdom to give, or to bestow upon all he Espouseth, a Rich Kingdom, an Immovable Kingdom, A Kingdom is ready for every Believer. Jam. 2. 5.

Luk. 12.32 dom, yea an Eternal Kingdom : *Fear not, little Flock, it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*

A glorious Throne is ready.
XXI. There is not only a Kingdom ready, but a Throne is ready also, for every Believer ; all that Christ Espouseth, shall sit down with him on his Throne, and Judge the World with him ; *He that overcometh shall sit down with me in my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*

A Crown of Glory is ready.
XXII. And Lastly, There is likewise a Crown of Glory ready : Surely, all may see here is Incouragement enough to come to this Marriage Supper ; every Believer shall have a Crown of Glory, far better than a Crown of Gold ; Earthly Crowns are troublesome things, as I am persuaded they that wear them at this time find, by woful Experience. One of the French Kings found it so formerly, which made him say, as I have Read, *That if a Crown lay at his Feet, he would not put forth his Hand to lift it up to put it upon his Head.* But this Crown will be an Easy Crown ; No Trouble, no sharp Thorn will attend the Crown of Life : See what Paul says, *I have Fought the good Fight, I have Finished my Course, I have kept the Faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* Ay, perhaps you may say, a Crown was laid up for Paul, that may be, but we are not Pauls, we are not such Captains for Christ as he was : Well, but see further what he says, *Which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give to me at that Day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that Love his Appearance.* Every true Believer shall have a Crown of Glory ; *Rev. 2. 10. Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* Earthly Men strive for an Earthly Crown, a Corruptible Crown ; but we, saith the Apostle, for an Incorruptible.

Application.

Reproof.] Is it so ? *Are all things now Ready ?* Then I Infer, it is an unreasonable thing for any to neglect to come to this Wedding ; how severely doth it Reprove such who delay ? Should any Noble Man make a great Supper, and bid many, and send one Servant after another, to bid those that are Invited to come away, *For all things are now Ready,* and they should defer coming to another time, would it not greatly offend him, and be horrid Ingratitude, and a shameful Abuse of his Bounty ? Pray observe what St. Luke says, *And he sent his Servants at Supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now Ready:* It

was just at Supper-time, when every thing was ready, and set upon the Table, the King sent his Servants ; if you come not, you cast great Contempt upon the King, and slight his Rich and Gracious Favours ; Nay, and so far as you can (to speak after the manner of Men) Disappoint him : Shall he provide all these great Varieties in vain ! Shall the Glorious Creator wait for, and look out, to see when his Guests will come, and all to no purpose ! *They all, with one consent, began to make Excuse :* Wonder, O ye Heavens, at this !

Exhortation.

2. Be Exhorted to come away ; be not like these Wretched Creatures : Will you make Excuses too ? Have you other Business to do, and cannot come ? Then will the King be Wrath, and say, concerning you that hear me this Day, as in the Words following, *For I say unto you, that none of those Men which were bidden, shall taste of my Supper.* That is, Not One of them shall have the Pardon of their Sins, be Justified, Sanctified, Saved, none of them shall ever know how good Christ is, his Love is, nor how good Peace with God, and Peace of Conscience is. It is as much as if God should say, all these Men shall be Damned, and Perish in their Sins, and be Undone for Ever.

Sirs, Mind the Words as a strong Motive, *Come, for all things are now ready ;* Can there be a more prevailing Argument than this is, *Now Ready ;* there is no staying one Moment without the highest Peril, and severe Displeasure of Almighty God. What do you say ? Will you deal kindly and truly with God, and with your own Souls ? Let me allude to, and make use of the Words of Abraham's Servant, who was sent to Rebecca, who was Born to Bethuel Son of Milcch, the Wife of Nahor, to take her to be the Wife of Isaac : *And now (saith he) if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me, and if not tell me, that I may turn to the Right-hand or to the Left.* O that you would say with Laban and Bethuel in the next Words, *viz. The thing proceedeth from the Lord, behold Rebecca is before thee, take her, and let her become thy Master's Son's Wife, as the Lord hath spoken.* Will you say, we will this Evening go to Jesus Christ, or accept of this most Gracious Invitation, and Embrace the Lord Jesus : The thing is of the Lord, and we cannot longer refuse to come to this Supper : O were it thus, tho' it were but one Soul that should thus do, What Cause of Joy should I have, who thus have spent my Time and Strength amongst

mongst you, tho the great Profit will Redound to your own Immortal Souls !

I may truly say, this Day Life and Death are set before you, tho it is God that must Work in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure : If you do come, if you do believe, and receive Jesus Christ, you have Life ; but if you do refuse him, and abide in Unbelief, expect nothing but Death ; *He that Believeth and is Baptized, shall be Saved, but he that Believeth not shall be Damned.*

Mark. 16.
16.

Caution.

Secondly, One Word to you that are Professors, and I will conclude at this time.

1. But by way of Caution, you Profess your selves to be Believers, such that are come to Sup with Christ ; but take heed lest you are Deceived ; you are this Evening to come to Eat the Lord's Supper, and that you may do, and yet not partake of the Provision of this Marriage Supper ; they are not all that Eat of the Bread and Drink of the Cup, in the Sacrament, that feed indeed on Jesus Christ, or that have Union with him ; no, no, many of the Visible Church may Perish for Ever.

Therefore, see what Faith you have, what Love you have to Christ, and whe-

ther you are thoroughly Changed, effectually Renewed in Heart and Life.

O see what Fruits of Faith, and of Divine Union with Christ, appears in you : Do not please your selves with a Name, or with an External Profession of Religion ; you may have Lamps, but no Oyl in your Vessels, you may have the Shell, but not the Kernel : Many in these Evil Days have a Form of Godliness, but want the Power of it ; but the time draws near now, when the Sinners in Sion shall be afraid ; Fearfulness will surprize the Hypocrite.

Consolation.

2. But to you that are Sincere, who do Believe to the saving of your Souls, what Comfort and Consolation doth this Doctrine administer to you ! What tho you are Poor in this World, and Despised of Men, yet know, *You are Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joynt Heirs with Christ.* Rom. 8. You have heard what your Spiritual Robes are, how Rich, how Glorious, and how High you are Advanced. You are made near to God, Espoused to Christ, and Born Heirs to a Crown of Glory ; Live, O Live as such that are thus raised to Honour ; carry your selves as Kings Children, and trample all Sublunary Things under your Feet.

S E R M O N XII.

M A T T H. XXII. 4.

All things are ready, come to the Marriage.

Luke, xiv. xvii. *He sent his Servants at Supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now Ready.*

March 7.
1697.

THE Parts, according to Luke, are these following :

1. Here is a Mission, *He sent his Servants.*
2. The Person Commissionating, *A certain Man ; according to Matthew, A certain King, viz. the Great God.*
3. The Persons Commissionated, *His Servants, viz. his Ministers.*
4. The Commission it self, *To say to them that were bidden, Come, viz. Preach the Gospel, and Excite Sinners to come to Christ, to Believe in him, receive him, or Eat of his Dainties, or Espouse Jesus Christ.*
5. The time when this Commission was given, *viz. At Supper-time.*
6. The Motive, *For all things are now Ready. VVe have observed.*

D O C T R I N E.

That the Blessings of the Gospel, or Grace, and Union with Jesus Christ, contains in it all sorts of Spiritual Dainties ; or of a Sumptuous Banquet ready provided, to which Sinners are Invited, to come and Eat.

1. What this Feast doth Denote you have heard.
2. Why compared to a Feast.
3. What King it is that made this Feast.
4. What is meant by these Words, *All things are now Ready.*
5. I shall now proceed to shew you, the Nature, or blessed Quality, of the Provision which this Feast, or Marriage-Supper doth consist of.
7. And

7. And then show what is meant by coming, and by eating.

I. As to the Nature of the Food, Itold you 'tis Heavenly food, it is a Spiritual or Heavenly Feast; Therefore the Nature of all the Provision is Spiritual, it is Food for the Soul, not for the Body; as is the Nature of the Soul, such is the Nature of that Food it Liveth upon: Material food cannot feed an immaterial Creature, that which is Earthly, is fed with Earthly food, but that which is Spiritual, is fed with Spiritual food; therefore the food of this Feast must needs be of an excellent Nature, The Meat came from Heaven, Bread from Heaven, the word of God is called *the incorruptible word, that Liveth and abideth for ever*.

1 Pet. 1.
23.

Food of
a Soul-
transform-
ing Na-
ture.

2 Cor. 3.
18.

2 Pet. 1.4.

Food of
God's pro-
viding.

II. *Transforming*. This is the marvellous Property or Efficacy of this Food, if a Sinner eats it, it will beget in him a Divine Likeness unto God, or form Christ's Image in his Soul: Brethren, by Eating, we lost God's Image; I mean, by *eating the forbidden Fruit*, and by eating of this Food, we have God's Image again restored in us; by our first eating we came to have an evil Nature, evil Qualities Infused into us, or a likeness to the Devil; And by eating *i.e.* in believing, the Holy Spirit, infuseth a Holy Nature into the Soul. *But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of God, are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. This beholding and believing, or feeding on Jesus Christ, is all one, and the same thing, the Spirit is the only Agent that doth it, he works this Change, he works in the Soul this Faith, and in his helping a poor Sinner to believe, eat, or receive Jesus Christ; holy habits of grace, and so a Glorious change is wrought in the Soul. *Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, not a Communication of the Essence of God to us, but an infusion of Divine Qualities and Dispositions i.e.* The true Knowledge of God with Righteousness and true Holiness.

III. *It is food of Gods own providing, and indeed the best of Heaven, and it is food that can be had no where else, but at this Marriage; an Earthly King may provide choice Provision, or Costly and rare Dainties at the Marriage of his only Son, and Heir of his Kingdom: But perhaps some of his Nobles may provide as Costly, as rare and Rich dainties at their Sons Weddings, but so 'tis not here,*

thou hast the words of eternal Life; John 6. that is thou, and none but thee: 68. none hath eternal Life to give, Grace to give, Glory to give, but thee alone; neither is there Salvation in any other, Act. 4: 12. for there is none other name given under Heaven, among Men, whereby we must be saved.

IV. *It is wholesome food; other diet, or rare dainties, may be choice, sweet to the Taste, and please the Pallat; but they may be hurtful to the Body, and breed Diseases, or surfeit the Person that feeds on it; but so it is not here, it is not of a destructive Nature, but contrary wise, by Eating, by Believing, Sin dyes; it tends to Kill the Old-Man i.e. The Body of Sin, a Wickedman may say, as those in another case, O thou Man of God, there is death in the Pot: Sirs! there is death to every beloved Lust, by believing in Christ, or feeding by Faith, on him; therefore to the Soul it is very wholesome Food, you cannot eat too much here, no Man ever believed in Jesus Christ too much, you cannot have too much Faith, the more you eat and drink of this Provision, the better, the more strong, Healthy and Hearty you will be.*

V. It is Physical Food, as well as it is sweet to the Taste, and excellent in Nourishment, it will heal all your Soul diseases, many are averse to take Physick, they love no Purging-Potion, nor any other Medicines whatsoever; but could they find a Physician that could prescribe some Delicious Food to them, Meat, or Drink, that would cure them of all their Bodily distempers whatsoever, such a Physician would please them well; especially if upon Tryal they should experience a perfect Cure thereby, O what flying would there be to such a Person!

Why, if you come now to this Marriage Supper, and feed on these spiritual dainties, I can assure you Sinners, on the word of my great Master, and by the experience of many Thousands of true Christians, it will Cure you of all your soul Maladies, or spiritual Distempers, let them be whatsoever they are, or can be.

VI. Tho' it be Physical Food, yet it is sweet and delightful Meat also; *I sat down under his Shadow, with delight, and his Fruit was sweet unto my Taste, it is sweet in the Mouth, and it will not be bitter in the Belly, not like John's little Book; the very Judgments of God, in the way of his Providences, may be sweet to the Souls of the Godly, yet bitter to the Wicked, Nay, unto the Saints they may be bitter in some sense,*

'Tis whole-
some food.

2 King. 4.
34-40.

This food
is Physi-
cal, curing
all Soul
diseases.

Cant. 2. 3.

Rev. 10. 9

sense, yet in Christ is nothing bitter; how sweet is it to feed on his Love, on his Righteousness, on Justification, on pardon of Sin, on Adoption, on communion with him? Nothing is so good as God in Christ; whosoever feedeth on the Creature, or on their Lusts, how sweet so ever they may Taste in their Mouth, they will be bitter at last, bitter in the Belly, bitter to Eternity: Surely he shall not find quietness in his Belly; no, nothing but Horror, Pain, and Perplexity, for ever.

VII. It is not Cloying, a little of some food Cloys a Man presently; hence saith Solomon, it is not good to eat too much Honey; he gives a reason for it, viz. *Lest thou be filled therewith, and Vomit it up*; too much of Earthly and sensual delights are not good; they oppress the Stomach, I mean the Conscience, and must therefore be Vomited up by Repentance, but this sweet and delicate food will not turn the Stomach, it is Consoling, but not Cloying, nor Surfeiting.

VIII. It is (as one observes) undiminisshable Food, you may feed upon Jesus Christ day by day, and yet he is a whole Christ still, a full Christ still, this food doth not waste by eating, it is like the *Widows Barrel of Meal, and Cruse of Oyl*, it diminisheth not: Let Millions come and eat plentifully, they will leave (notwithstanding) as much in Christ as they found: The blessed God need not go and buy more Provision, tho' never so great Multitudes come to this Marriage Supper.

IX. It is incorruptible food, Immortal food, all other food perishes in eating, and he that feedeth upon it Perishes also: But as this food, this Bread never Perisheth, so shall he that eats of it never Perish; the Meat that is eaten at this Marriage Feast, endureth for ever: *Labour not for the meat which Perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting Life, which the Son of Man will give unto you; for him hath God the Father Sealed.* What Labour is it which our Saviour intendeth? Are we to work for Life, or must we earn our Bread before we Eat it? No no, all our Labour cannot procure it. Hence he adds, *which the Son of Man will give unto you*; they that followed our Lord in the days of his humiliation, eat of these Loaves, which he broke unto them freely, it cost them nothing; they had all on free cost; yet in following him from place to place, they are said to Labour for it, for our Saviour alludes unto that, *verily verily I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the Miracles, but be-*

cause ye did eat of the Loaves and were Filled. Some think that the food Christ Blessed and Multiplied, namely, the Bread and Fishes, Tasted more Sweet, and was more Delicious than any other of the same kind, perhaps it might be so, and that might make the Multitudes follow him, to eat thereof: For no doubt many of them did not want Bread, however they had it freely, tho' in following him they are said to Labour for it: So, all the Labour thou art to take for this incorruptible Food, is to come to this Wedding, or to come unto Jesus Christ, for tho' it Perishes not, yet it is to be had without Money, and without Price.

X. It is suitable Provision, agreeable, and Meat for all sorts of Guests, that come to this Feast.

A little to open this.

(1.) Consider it suits, or is agreeable with every age of those Persons, which come, here is *Milk* for Babes, and *strong Meat* belonging unto them that are of full Age, even those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and Evil. Here is the sincere Milk of the Word, for weak Converts, that which suits and is agreeable to them i. e. plain and easy Truths for Weak Capacities, and also more sublime Mysteries of Christ, or those deep things of God, which are proper for Men of great knowledge and understanding, and of long experience to feed upon.

(2.) Here is food suitable to every state, and condition, the Souls of Men can be in.

1. Such that are dead, here is that food that will quicken them, give Life to them.

2. Such that Languish, and are ready to die, here is food to Revive, and increase Life in them.

3. Such that are cold and Lifeless, here is such food that will enliven, heat, warm, and quicken them; thy word (saith David) hath quickened me, before he was dead and flat in his Spirit, but by feeding i. e. by believing, or receiving the word of God, he was quickened, it strengtheneth the weak Soul.

4. Such that have dim Eyes, this food will strengthen their sight, as well as open the Eyes of the Blind; it is like *Jonathans Honey*; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes; the entrance of thy word giveth Light, it giveth understanding to the Simple. So soon as you let this food go down, or let the Word enter into your Hearts, you will find your Souls much enlightned thereby.

5. Such that are sad, and dejected in their

Job. 20.
20.

Prov. 25.
27.

1 King.
17. 14.

John 6.
27.

John 6.
26.

Isa. 55.
1, 2.

Heb. 5.
14.

1 Pet. 2.
1, 2.

Psal. 119.
50. 93.

Psal. 119.8.

Psal. 119.
130.

their Spirits, here is food to chear, and console them.

6. Such as are Consumptive, here is food that is Restorative, *he restores my Soul*. I might enlarge, but let this suffice to open what we intend.

XI. It is suitable food, in respect it so well agrees with the Souls of Believers, at all times, in Sicknes and Health, in Prosperity and Adversity, whilst they Live, and when they Dye.

XII. It is *Soul satisfying Food*, go whether you will else for Food, it will be Bread that satisfies not; *wherefore do ye spend Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfieth not?* All things short of Jesus Christ, the bread of Life, never Nourishes nor satisfies the Soul, they are all Vain, empty, and foolish things, there is no Soul-satisfying Food, but at this Marriage Feast, at the great King's providing, at the Marriage of his Son; this Food will allay all spiritual Hunger, fully satisfy all the desires, and necessities of the Soul, as the Prophet David found by blessed Experience. *Who satisfieth thy Mouth with good things, so that thy Youth is renewed like the Eagles.* Again he saith, speaking of the Lord; *He satisfieth the longing Soul, and filleth the Hungry soul with goodness.* It yieldeth such satisfaction that ariseth to Joy, and sweet delight; they delight themselves in Fatness.

Fifthly, *What is meant by coming to this Marriage Supper.*

1st. *Negatively.*

1. Not a bare coming to hear the word of God Preached; No, no, a Man may come to hear Sermons every day of his Life, but never for all that, come to Christ.

2. Not a giving heed to what may here be Preached: They may attend with some diligence to the Word, yet not come to Christ, or come to this Wedding Supper: *The Eyes of all that were in the Synagogue (it is said) were fix'd upon him;* they heard no doubt with great Attention, but few of them believed on him.

3. 'Tis not Legal Repenting, or Reformation of Life.

4. 'Tis not a simple Obeying of the Precepts of Christ, some talk of coming to Christ by Repentance, and others by Obedience, they think that if they come to Baptism, they come to Christ: But, alas! A Man may arrive to Legal Repentance, and Reformation of Life, and be Baptised, and Receive the Holy Supper, and never come to Christ, never come to the Marriage Supper.

2dly, And directly in the Affirmative, to come to Christ, or unto this

Wedding, so as to answer the Purport of this Invitation, it is to Believe, or Receive Jesus Christ by Faith: Believing in Christ, and coming unto Christ, are Convertible Terms, implying one and the same thing; *I am the Bread of Life, he that cometh to me shall never*

Hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never Thirst. Here is mention made of Bread, eating of it; our feeding upon him, is employed and held forth by coming to him, which also he expresseth, by believing on him; all which is no more, nor less, than a true Receiving him, as Mediator and the only Saviour.

Sixthly, *What is meant by eating or feeding on the Provision, provided at this Marriage Supper?*

1. I Answer, the very same thing, with Believing, and Coming, provided it be such a coming, such a eating, as the invitation intendeth; or that answers the design of God therein; for tho' there is one that was said to come, who had no *Wedding Garment*; yet he did not come in a true and rightmanner *i. e.* he did not Believe, he did not Eat, for thereby the Wedding Garment is put on; had he believed truly on Jesus Christ, he had not wanted a Wedding Garment.

2. *Feeding or Eating*, is to experience the preciousness and sweetness of the Lord Jesus Christ, or to know that the Lord is good, a Man that sees food set upon a Table, and beholds it with his Eyes, may conceive or suppose it is good and excellent Food; but he doth not by Tasting know how sweet and choice it is: So a Man that hears the Word, hears Christ Preached, and the Excellencies of Christ Opened; may be persuaded, in some degree, that there is great good in him, or that he is a precious Christ; but if he doth not receive him by a lively Faith, or not savingly believe in him, he knows not by experience how good he is to the Soul: Hence David Cryes, *O, Taste! And see the Lord is good;* Labour to feed upon him, to receive him by Faith, and then you will find how good he is: *If so be that you have Tasted the Lord is gracious.*

3. To feed on this Supper, is to make Christ our own, as he that feedeth upon food makes that food his own; so a Believer makes the promise, and Christ in a promise, and in an Ordinance his own. This it is to Eat, *i. e.* it is to apply Jesus Christ to our own Souls.

4. It is to live wholly upon Jesus Christ, or to go out of our selves, to him alone, fetching all we want from him,

What it is to come to the Marriage Supper.

John 6.

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him, leaning upon, and trusting in his Righteousness, and on the Merits of his Blood only, exclusively of every thing else, and inclusively, of whatsoever in a spiritual Sense, we need.

5. It is to stay upon Christ; as Bread is the Stay and Staff of Man's Life, and he that Feeds thereon finds Strength and Support thereby: so Christ is the Stay and Staff of the Soul, and to Feed on this Food, is to receive Strength from Jesus Christ. Strength against Sin, against the Power and Dominion thereof; and Strength against Satan's Temptations, and also against Slavish Fear, and the Spirit of Bondage: and Strength against all Reproaches, Trials, and Persecutions, a Believer may meet with (and all Discouragements) for the sake of Christ.

Application.

Reproof.] This Reproves, and shews the great Folly of all such Sinners, who refuse to come to this Marriage Supper. Is such the Nature of this Food, and wilt thou slight and contemn it, nor desire to Taste it?

2. It Informs us also, What the Cause is, that the spiritual Diseases, and Soul-sicknesses of Sinners remain, and they are not Healed: Alas! they do not come to Jesus Christ, they do not Believe in him, receive him; there is in Believing a Cure for every Disease of the Soul: Also there is no Help, no Cure, no Healing, any where else, nor by any other way or thing, but by Christ alone.

3. It moreover discovers the Cause or Reason, so many of the Saints and People of God are so weak, so low, and ready to faint; in their Spirits, it appears evidently it is, because they have no more Faith in Christ, they do not with a strong Faith rely upon him, or feed up-

on him: Can a Man expect to be strong, or gather strength, that forsakes his Food, that cannot, or doth not Eat? the way to be strong is, to Feed plentifully on wholesome Food; so the way to get spiritual Strength is, to feed freely upon the Lord Jesus; This is to be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, or to be strong in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus, i. e. to Believe with a strong and fixed Faith, upon that Fulness that is in Christ, *Eat, O Friends, Drink, Drink abundantly, O Beloved.* O take in freely and plentifully, by Faith, the Merits of my Blood, see how my Father in me is Pacified towards you, and fully Reconciled, and you in me are Accepted, Justified, and Pardoned for Ever.

Eph. 6.
10, 11.

Cant. 5.1.

4. From hence also we may see what the Cause is, that some who come to hear the Word, received no spiritual and saving Benefit thereby, nor know how good it is: Alas, they Believe not, they do not Eat the Word, *Thy Word was found, and I did Eat it.* Such only receive Christ, and receive the Good that is in the Word of Christ, that truly Believe in him.

5. Moreover it Informs us, how exceeding Precious the Lord Jesus is unto a Believer; or what he is made to be unto him, even every thing.

Exhortation.

Oh, Believers! Be persuaded from hence, to bless God for Jesus Christ, and Prize him as your All; you that have Christ, have All, you have every thing that is truly Good: O how happy are all they that feed by Faith on Jesus Christ! What Soul-strengthening, Soul-healing, Soul-comfort have they!

But no more at this time.

SERMON

S E R M O N XIII.

M A T H. XXII. 5.

But they made Light of it.

March. 13
1697.

THER, That is, the Jews First, it Principally in the First place refers to them, and also to all who slight the Lord Jesus, or Union with him, or his Gracious Benefits, and that Glorious Provision provided in the Gospel. From hence let me take Notice of this Point of Doctrine, viz.

D O C T R I N E.

That although there is so much Good to be had in Jesus Christ, to whom Sinners are Invited, yet many of them make Light of him, and all he hath to Impart to them.

I. Shew what it is to make Light of a Thing, and so what it is to make Light of Jesus Christ.

II. Shew you, What Sinners do make Light of.

III. Shew you, The Evil, and great Danger in making Light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Give you the Reasons, or Causes, why Sinners do make Light of Christ, or from whence it doth arise.

What it is
to make
Light of
Jesus
Christ.

I. To make Light of a Thing or Person, is to Slight it, or Slight the Person, or not Value him, accounting him not worth Regard: And thus Sinners make Light of Christ, and of this most Gracious Invitation: They Slight, and Value not the Lord of Life and Glory; they Value neither an Interest in his Person, nor the Merits of his Blood, but Slight his Love, Grace, and Infinite Goodness; and regard not the Offers he makes to them.

2. To make Light of a Thing, or of a Person, is not so much as to think seriously of it, or of him, not accounting the Person worth one deliberate Thought: As perhaps a Virgin may be told of a very good Match, or of a deserving Person far exceeding her Quality or Merits; but she cries, Pish, away with him, she will not let out one Thought upon him; perhaps she hath heard something of him, that is distasteful to her. Thus many Sinners make Light of Jesus Christ; tell them that Christ commends his Love to them, and would gladly Embrace them in his Arms, and Espouse them; but they, in their Hearts, cry away with him, I see

no Beauty, no Loveliness in him; I cannot leave all my sweet Delights and Pleasures for such a Choice, for such a Companion. Pray, saith the poor Messenger, (the Minister of Christ) think seriously of this so Great and Gracious an Offer: Pish, say they, trouble not your self with me, I will none of him: Thus God spake of Old, of his People Israel, *My People will have none of me; --- they say to God depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.* This is to make Light of this Marriage Feast, or of Union with the Son of God.

Job 21.14

3. To make Light of a Thing, or Person, is to Contemn it; this is a higher Degree of making Light of a Thing, &c. Will you accept of such an Offer, of such a Person? The Answer is, No, I Contemn the Motion and Person you Mention, I Despise him in my Heart; to set Light by Parents with a Witness, is to Despise them when Old or Poor.

And thus do some Sinners make Light of Jesus Christ, or set Light by him, and all the spiritual Dainties prepared at this Marriage-Supper, i. e. they Contemn and Despise him in their Hearts; *Ye have both hated me and my Father.* You are so far from Liking, Loving, and Receiving me into your Bosomes, that you even Abhor me and my People: *If the World hate you, you know it hated me before it hated you.*

Joh. 15.

24.

Joh. 15.

18.

4. To make Light of a Thing, or Person, is to do some Action, directly contrary to that which is proposed: As Ahab, who did Evil in the sight of the Lord, *And as if it had been a Light thing for him to walk in the Sins of Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat; that he took to Wife Jezebel, the Daughter of Ethbaal:* That which he knew was directly contrary to the Will of God, or Distasteful to him.

1 King.

16. 30, 31.

Thus Sinners do some base Actions, contrary to what God Professes to them in the Gospel, viz. They joyn in with the Devil, and in Affinity with their filthy Lusts, and strengthen themselves in their own Evil Ways.

5. To make Light of a thing, may be yet further opened, viz. When a Matter of greatest Moment is propounded unto a Person, and he presently says, Truly, I will think of it, but I cannot now attend upon that Affair, I have other Business to mind at present, which,

R r r r r

may

may be, is to go prove some Yoke of Oxen, or see a Farm which he hath newly Bought, or other things of like Nature; or Walk for their Health in the Fields, when they should attend on the Word: Now, when such frivolous things are chosen, before a diligent Attention upon the Means of Grace, or about the Affairs of another World; this is to make Light of Christ, and of all the Blessings which he hath Purchased.

As of one of the French Kings, who was Playing at some Game with his Nobles, and one came to acquaint him with a Treacherous Design against his Life; the Messenger signifying it was a serious Thing, or Matter of great Moment, he Reply'd, he would mind serious Things to Morrow, he was not at leisure then, so he lost his Life. Pray mind what Luke speaks of those whom Matthew saith made Light of it; the first said, *I have bought a piece of Ground, and I must needs go to see it, I pray thee have me Excused.* One would have thought, he should have went to see it before he had bought it. *Another said, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me Excused.* And another said, *I have Married a Wife, and I cannot come.* Now this is to make Light of this great Concernment; are not these frivolous Excuses? And are they not strangely Deluded, thus to Court their own Ruine, and to pray to be Excused from minding their own Eternal Happiness? This is to make Light of it, i. e. Not only to defer this great Business till to Morrow, or till hereafter; but to prefer Earthly Concerns above the Matters of Everlasting Life, or Union with Jesus Christ.

II. What is it which Sinners make Light of?

1. I Answer, they make Light of the Word of God, or of the Preaching of the Gospel, which must needs be a very great Sin and Evil; because the Preaching of the Gospel is appointed to Work Faith, through the Influences of the Spirit, *So then Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God; it is a Mighty Instrument of God's Power unto Salvation, to every one that Believeth:* Hence it is said, that it pleaseth God, *by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save them that Believe.*

Now they make Light of this great Blessing, which is the Means of their Salvation; and will not attend upon the Word, or when they heard it, Slight it.

2. They that make Light of the Convictions of their own Consciences, as Felix did; *And as he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, Felix trembled:* His Conscience was Awakened, and he was convinced of his Sin, of his Intemperance, and Unrighteousness;

Paul touched him in his tender Place: Well, but did he cherish these Convictions? No, no, but he contrariwise, liked it not; but answered, *Go thy Way at this time, when I have a convenient Season, I will send for thee:* But evident it is, he soon forgot Paul's Doctrine, and so made Light of it, and continued in his former Evils: And thus many Sinners still daily do; it may be under the Word, their Consciences may convince them, and sorely Gripe them, for living in this or that Sin, and in the neglect of this and that Duty; but they turn a Deaf Ear unto the Checks and Convictions of their Hearts and Consciences, and so make Light of it, or regard it not. They that make Light of the Convictions and Rebukes of their Consciences, which rise from the Light of God's Word, make Light of God himself. Now, they that make Light of this Offer, do make Light of the most Gracious Offer and Invitation that ever was afforded to the Sons and Daughters of Men; and this will appear by the Induction of Particulars following.

1. It is an Invitation of the greatest and highest Pity; God the Father is called, *The Father of Mercies;* because he is the Fountain or Original of Good, which floweth to poor Creatures: *And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had Compassion on his People, and on his Dwelling-place.* And now, as he, out of Pity and Compassion, sent to them, under that Dispensation, so he hath sent his Ministers and Messengers to poor Sinners, under the Gospel, knowing what Wrath and Ruine will fall upon them, which they must endure to Eternity, if they come not to this Marriage Supper, but rather slight and refuse his most Gracious Invitation.

2. It is not only an Offer and Invitation full of Pity and Mercy, but also as full of Love, and rich Bounty: O, what a Feast is here prepared! and what a Design hath the Lord in it! He Invites them to a Noble Banquet, and what is comprehended in it, and God's Gracious Design therein you have heard.

3. It is an often repeated Offer and Invitation, and he sent other Servants. God tries what one Minister may do; but if Sinners will not hear him, hearken to him, or come at his bidding, he sends another, and another after him, *Go, say to them that were bidden, all things are now ready.* May be, some of you have been Invited an Hundred times, to come to Christ, to Believe in Christ; yea a Thousand times, and yet refuse: O! how Unexcusable will God leave Sinners, that Eternally Perish: *I have called, and you have refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man Regarded; but ye have set at nought*

Luk. 14.
18.

Verf. 19.

What an invitation this is.
2 Cor. 1.3.

Chron. 36.
15. 16.

What sinners make light of.

Rom. 10.
17.

Rom. 1.16

1 Cor. 1.
21.

Act. 24.25

Prov. 1.
24. 25.

nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof. Certainly, such who make light of this Invitation, are such that do thus, i. e. they set at nought all God's Counsel, and contemn his Love and Favour extended to them.

^{Tis a free invitation} 4. It is a free Invitation; all the Provision (as you have heard) is prepared at God's own proper Charge; Sinners are not required to bring any thing with them; no, that would be a dishonourable thing to him, and stain his Glory.

1st. God was under no Necessity to make this Marriage-Feast, nor to Invite this and that Man or Woman unto it; it was an Act all of his own free Mercy, Love, and Goodness; it was this only which moved him thus to do.

^{Job 35. 7.} 2^{dly}, Doth the blessed God receive any Profit, or Advantage, to himself hereby? *Can Man profit God? ---- If thou art Righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine Hand?* Our Righteousness cannot oblige God; we are but Unprofitable Servants, when we have done all we are Commanded: The Righteousness, or Righteous Actions of Men, contribute nothing to God; they are no Advantage to him, the best that we can do; *My Goodness (saith David) extendeth not to thee.* If the Righteousness of Christ added nothing to the Essential Glory of God, how should any thing that Sinners can do? Can their Believing make God more Happy, more Glorious than he is? *Who hath given unto him, and it shall be recompenced?* All that we can do is due to him; it is a Debt we owe to God. Besides, we can do nothing in a way of Faith, &c. but what we received Power to do from him. There can be nothing added to him, God is so Full; what can be put into a Vessel that is full to the brims?

^{Rom. 11. 34.}

O, Sirs! All that God hath to Impart to Sinners, in this Marriage-Feast, is of his own Free-Grace; he receives not a Pin of us for any thing: He says to his Guests that come and Eat plentifully, you are all heartily Welcome, here is nothing to Pay. It would, indeed, be Ridiculous for a King to Invite Men to a Wedding-Supper, and let them pay any thing for what they Eat or receive; but much more Dishonourable to God; therefore, they that joyn their Faith, and sincere Obedience with God's Free-Grace, and Christ's Merits, have cause to Blush and be Ashamed.

3^{dly}. All the Good and Heavenly Blessings Imparted to Sinners, is bestowed without the least Merit or Desert of the Creature: Doth a Man deserve such Favours? Can a Rebel deserve a free Pardon of a Prince, or to be advanced to high Honour?

4^{thly}. It is a clear, a plain and full In-

itation; God in the Gospel speaks plainly to Sinners, tho sometimes in Parables; which he pleased to help his Servants to open them; yet at other times Sinners may say with the Disciples, *Lo! now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no* ^{Joh. 16. 29.} *Proverb: Doth not Christ speak plainly, when he saith, He that Believeth, and is Baptized, shall be Saved; but he that Believeth not shall be Damned. And again, He that hath the Son hath Life, but he that hath not the Son hath not Life. If ye Believe not that I am he, ye shall Dye in your Sins.* ^{Mark. 16. 16.} What plainer Expressions could he use? He tells you it is not by Works, but by Grace ye are Saved; nay, it is he that Worketh not, but Believeth on him that Justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted to him for Righteousness: That is, Christ received by Faith, or his Righteousness so apprehended, is our Righteousness to Justification, in God's sight.

5^{thly}, It is an open, and publick Invitation; it is like a Proclamation put forth by a King, to Pardon all Guilty and Rebellious Traytors, that come in and plead his Gracious Clemency, thro an Attonement made by another: *Ho, every one that Thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money come, yea come, buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price:* Be ye whosoever, whether Jews or Gentiles, great Sinners or small, Bond or Free, Young or Old, Rich or Poor; whoever Thirsteth after Happiness, or would be saved, but know not the way: *Hear, and your Souls shall Live.* ^{Isa. 55. 1, 2.} What Grace is here, and how publickly offered! *Go, and Proclaim these Words towards the North, and say, Return, Back-sliding Israel, and I will not cause my Anger to fall upon you; for I am Merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep my Anger for ever; only acknowledge thine Iniquities, that thou hast Transgressed against the Lord thy God.* ^{Jer. 3. 12, 13.} Here is a loud cry, an open Proclamation to be made in the high Place, at the opening of the Gate. *Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her Voice in the Streets; She cryeth in the chief place of Concourse, in the opening of the Gates; in the City she uttereth her Words, &c.* ^{Prov. 1. 20, 21.} Those Sinners that make Light of this Invitation thus openly made, will find many to Witnes against them, at the Last Day.

6^{thly}. It is a large and comprehensive Invitation; it is to all Sinners, none by Name exempted; so that one hath no more cause or reason, to say I am not comprehended in it, any more than another, *Go into all the World, Preach the Gospel unto every Creature.* ^{Mark. 16. 15.}

The chiefeft of Sinners have Encouragement to take of this Gracious Offer of Pardon and Peace, thro Jesus Christ; yea, the Back-sliding Sinner, the Stout-hearted Sinner; *I have spread out my Hands* ^{Isa. 65. 1.}

Iſa. 46.
12.

verſe 13.

2 Cor. 5.
11.

2 Cor. 5.
20.

Gen. 19.
16.

John 6.
36.

John 5.
25.

Hands all the day long, to a Rebellious People: One would think this should Melt the hard and Obstinate Sinners Heart, and that none should be so Vile, as to make light of this Invitation: *Hearken to me ye Stout Hearted, that are far from Righteousness*, that have no Righteousness of their own, and seek not after any, but delight in Sin and Wickedness; *I bring near my Righteousness*; I have provided you a Righteousness of my own, a Righteousness which I am well pleased with; it agreeing exactly with my Holy Law, and Holy Nature; and I bring it near to you, that are Unrighteous, and Ungodly Persons, come to this Marriage Feast, and God will put this Robe of Righteousness upon you, tho' you are never so Filthy, and Unclean in your selves.

7thly. It is a pressing and most earnest Invitation: Alas! the Sinner's Life lies at Stake, His Soul is in Danger; *We knowing the Terror of the Lord, Persuade Men*, to Believe and be fully assured, that there shall be a great and Terrible day of the Lord, and that the Slighters of Gods Gracious Call and Invitations, shall be Cast into a Lake of Fire and Brimstone; we therefore are earnest with Sinners; *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us; We Pray you in Christ's Stead, be you Reconciled to God*: The Angels bid Lot hasten out; while he Lingred, the Men laid hold upon him: Brethren, God must lay hold upon Sinners, and Pull them out of Satans Hands, and out of the Pit where they Lie.

8thly. It is at a seasonable time you are Invited, 'tis while it is to Day, and just at supper time, when the Table is Spread, and every thing quite Ready; And the great God waiteth for your coming; *The Lord waits to be Gracious*, He (as it were) looks out for you; He sees a Coming Sinner, tho' he be as yet a great way off: Sirs! would not an Earthly King be greatly Offended, if such that he should invite to Supper with him at such an Hour, should delay coming, tho' he sends to them just at Supper-time, and Waits for them, and yet they come not?

9thly. It is to some an Effectual Invitation, it tends to make the Soul Willing, that is given to Christ: *All that the Father hath given unto me, shall come unto me*. Whoſoever has a Heart, a Will to come, a desire to Believe, may be Assured that they are given unto Jesus Christ: *The Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall Live*; Christ calls shall be made Effectual to them; Lazarus could not resist the call of Christ, when

Dead in the Grave: Grace my Brethren, or rather the God of all Grace, Works Irresistably. *My People shall be willing in the day of my Power*. Pſal. 110.
3.

Application.

From hence we may Infer, that Sinners Naturally are strangely Blinded, and Deceived by Satan. Is it not strange that such an invitation should be Slighted, that any Sinner should make Light of it?

2. This also may inform us, that God is Infinitely Good, and Gracious to Undone Sinners; what Heart can Conceive of it, or what Tongue can Express it? His Mercy, Love, and Goodness, doth not only appear in his sending our Lord Jesus Christ, to Espouse Sinners; but also in sending his Ministers to Invite them to come, and accept of his most Gracious Offer; Nay, and in his often Repeating his Call; His Kind and Compassionate Invitations.

3. Moreover, from hence we Infer, that God will leave all Men at the Last Day, without Excuse. What will such Vile Sinners have to say, when they stand at Gods Tribunal, who were sent to, and Called upon, perhaps a Thousand times, to come unto Jesus Christ, or to come to this Marriage Supper; who Wickedly Refused it, and made Light of it?

4. Also, from hence we may be Informed, how Sinners are Insnared with the Love of this World, and the Perishing things thereof: They Prize and Vallue these things above their Immortal Souls! Nay, above an Interest in Jesus Christ: They rather Choose to have their Lusts, their Earthly Riches, Honours, and Pleasures here, than the free Pardon of all their Sins; and to be Acquitted, Justified, and made the Sons and Daughters of the most high God; and to be made Heirs of the Everlasting Kingdom of Glory, and a Crown that Fadeth not away.

5. Believers, also may from hence perceive, what cause they have to Admire Gods Free Grace to them. For had not he by his special Love, and Divine Goodness, overcome them, Influenced them by his Spirit, and Drawn them to his Son; Bowed, and Subjected their Rebellious Wills, and Chang'd their Hearts, they would as certainly made light of this Gracious Invitation, as any of the rest do: This is signified by these Words, *viz. Compel them* — *Who hath made thee to differ from another*. Didst thou O Soul make thy self to Differ? Was it by
virtue

1 Cor. 4.
7.

Pom. 9.
16.

vertue of thy own Power ? Have they any thing to Glory in, or make their Boast of ? *It is not of him that Will-eth, nor of him that Runneth ; but of God that sheweth Mercy.*

6. Ministers may also Learn from hence, not to be Discouraged ; tho' they see but little success of their great Pains, and Labour ; it is no new thing, if the People would not be Intreated, be Persuaded, nor Prevailed with, to Cleave to the Lord, and accept of his Mercy, by the Holy Prophets, and Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but made light of their Words, and of that Message : Is it any Marvel, they slight the Word in our Mouths, and make Light of the Message we bring unto them ? Well may we say, *who*

bath Believed our Report ? And not Wonder ? If they would not hear their Report ? Nor the Report of our Blessed Lord himself.

7. And since this is so, let Poor Ministers Labour to be like their Master, viz. To wait Patiently upon the Souls of those People, to whom they Preach ; God the Father Waits long, Christ Waits long, the Holy Spirits Waits long, and are not Weary ; therefore let us also Wait ; let Ministers Faithfully discharge their Duty ? And deliver their Message, and leave the success of all unto God ? And say with their Blessed Lord, *tho' Israel be not Gathered, yet shall I be Glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my Strength.*

S E R M O N XIV.

M A T T H. XXII. 5.

But they made Light of it.

April, 25.
1697.

I have shewed you what it is Sinners make Light of.

I shall now proceed to shew further what Sinners make Light of, and also *the great Evil and danger that attends this Sin.*

The great
Evil and
Danger of
making
Light of
Gospel
Grace.

1. It is a very great Sin in Respect of what they make Light of : They slight and cast Contempt upon that Glorious Contrivance, of God's Infinite Wisdom, in that High and Sublime Council, that was held between the Father and the Son, before the World began. They make Light of the highest act of God's Wisdom, That ever was ; and this too, in the Clearest Revelation, and Manifestation thereof : Our Salvation was the highest act of the Wisdom of God ; and that the Gospel containeth the Clearest and fullest Revelation of this Glorious Wisdom, none will, or can Deny : The Result was to send the *second Person* of the Blessed Trinity, into the World, to Assume Man's Nature, or to be Incarnate in the Flesh ; and to lay the Sins of all the Elect upon him, as their great Sponsior, or Surety. Publick Head and Representative, and to Die for them i. e. In their Stead and Room. My Bretheren, should God have called the Angels together, to Consult about a way to raise fallen Man, from under the Fall and Curse, for the Breach of the first Covenant (so that the Honour of God might be preserved,

in respect of all his Blessed Attributes, and that Sin according to the demands of the Law, and Justification, might be ~~un~~swored and yet Divine Mercy be Magnified, in Pardoning Sinners ; could they think you have found out such a way ? No no, none but Infinite Wisdom, could do this ; hence God saith, *deliver him from going into the Pit, I have found a Ransome ;* Our Deliverance is by a Ransome, by a Price Paid to satisfy the Justice of God ; I have found a Ransome, it is the Contrivance of God, the Invention of God, and of him alone.

" If all Men on Earth (*saith a worthy Divine.*) Yea, if all the Angels in Heaven, had sat from the Foundation of the World to this Day, in Council, Beating their Brains, and Debating this Question, viz. *How Sinful Man might be Delivered, out of the Hand of the Law, or that Condemnation or Sentence, under which the Law had Cast and detained him, with Satisfaction, or without Damage, to the Justice and Righteousness of God ; They would never have found it out, nor anything like it ; This is God's own Invention : Or if God had said to fallen Man, I see thou art in a Lost and Pittiful Condition ; but sit down and consider how I may do thee Good, and not wrong my self ; how I may Relieve thee, and not Dishonour my self, and I will freely do it.* If God (I say) had given Man a Blank to Write down, what would he

Caril on
Job.
chap. 33.
24.

S s s s s

have

"have done to bring this about? he
 "could never have found it out, but
 "must have Perished for Ever in his
 "Sin. *Thus far this great Man*, no, no,
 it was God that devised the Means, that
 his Banished might not for ever be expelled
 from him.

But now, *Sirs!* Must not this be
 a most abominable Evil, for any Man
 or Woman to slight this Contrivance
 of God's profound Wisdom, or cast
 Contempt upon it, or to use the Words
 of my Text, *Make Light of it*: O!
 what is the Nature of this Sin? and
 what fearful Danger do such Sin-
 ners expose themselves unto, for
 Ever?

Joh. 3. 16.

2. The Evil and Danger must needs
 be great, not only as it casteth Contempt
 upon the Wisdom of God, but it is also
 a making Light of God's Infinite Mercy,
 Love, and Goodness: No greater Act
 of Love could spring from boundless E-
 ternity, than for God to part with his
 own dear Son, the only Delight of Hea-
 ven: No Gift could ever equal this
 Gift: *God so Loved the Word, that he*
gave his only begotten Son, &c. Gave him
 to what? To Redeem Sinners. Which
 way must he do it? He must Dye, he
 must bear the Curse of the Law for us:
 O, this was the most Stupendious Evi-
 dence of his Mercy, and Divine-Good-
 ness! Nay, and it is to Slight and make
 Light of the Precious Love of Jesus
 Christ, who freely gave himself to Dye
 for his Enemies: Oh! what Ingrati-
 tude is this! What, make Light of
 such Love! such Mercy! be Amazed, O
 ye Heavens! and be Astonished, O Earth!
 What Power hath the Devil over Mor-
 tals? What Blindness is there in their
 Understandings? What Enmity in their
 Minds? What Rebellion in their Wills?
 What Earthliness, and Carnality is there
 in their Affections? But what will be
 the end of these Persons? What Dan-
 gers do they run? And, what a hot Hell
 do they prepare, for their own Souls for
 Ever?

3. It is to make Light of God himself,
 for he Offers himself to be our God, he
 stands waiting to give himself, and all
 he hath, so far as it is Communicable to
 Creatures: But as he said to *Israel* of
 Old, *My People would have none of me*: So
 he may say now, this Sinner, and that
 Sinner will have none of me: they Des-
 pise me, not only my Love and tender
 Mercy, but they also Contemn me, and
 Slight me: They Value *Five Yoke of*
Oxen, a small parcel of *Land*, and their
 Pleasures, above me.

God Offers himself, in Christ, to be
 the Sinners God, to be their Father, to
 be their Friend, to be their Inheritance,
 and Portion for Ever: But what faith

my Text, *But they made Light of it*. They
 Slight and Contemn him in their Hearts:
 They think it is a better Choice to enjoy
 their earthly Riches, Honours and Plea-
 sures, their sensual Delights, their cursed
 Cups, and wicked Companions, their
 Pride and Ambition, and Merry Meet-
 ings, which they spend in Swearing,
 Drunkenness, and Blasphemy, treading
 the Holy God under their Feet, vilify-
 ing his Laws, spitting in his very Face,
 and contemning all things which are
 Good and Vertuous: But what will be
 the end of these Things!

4. They make Light of Christ, who
 waits to Espouse them. They Slight his
 Person who is *the chiefest among Ten Thou-*
sands. They make Light of his Beauty,
 Light of his Riches, his unsearchable
 Riches: Make Light of his most preci-
 ous Love, his early, his infinite, his
 comprehensible, his dying, his bleeding,
 his redeeming, and his espousing Love:
 O! what Sin and Folly, nay Madness, is
 in their Hearts!

5. They make Light of the Merits of
 Christ, and of his Satisfaction, of his
 Sorrows, of his Bloody Sweat, when in
 his fearful Agony of his Bloody Passion,
 they regard not the piercing of his Hands
 and Feet, by cruel Nails, nor the pierc-
 ing of his tender Heart with that bloody
 Spear: But by their Contempt of him,
 by their Unbelief, and hardness of Heart,
 they make it a light thing to Wound and
 Pierce him again: They regard not his
 Blood, no more than if it had been the
 Blood of a Malefactor: They offer Vio-
 lence to his Spirit, resist him that would
 apply his Blood, to the Salvation of their
 Souls: They contemn his Authority,
 make light of his Kingly, Priestly, and
 Prophetical Offices: O! what Evil is
 there in this Sin? and, what danger do
 they run? They make Light of a Mar-
 riage with Jesus Christ: To this end
 you have heard they are Called, or In-
 vited to this Feast: The Evil therefore
 in refusing so Gracious an Offer, must
 needs be very Great and Abominable:
 What! will the Prince Espouse his poor
 Servant, a Person of so low and base De-
 gree? Nay, one that hath been in act-
 ual Rebellion against him? And shall
 this Kindness, this Love, this Honour
 so undeserved, be made Light of? Won-
 der, O Heavens!

6. They make Light of a Marriage
 with Christ. This is the Effect of this
 Refusal: And this Contempt they Of-
 fer to the Son of God, and of all those
 Glories that attend and accompany
 him!

7. They make Light of the Holy
 Ghost. The Spirit waits upon them,
 to apply the Blood of Christ to their
 wounded Souls: But they make Light
 of

of his Motions, Influences and Operations.

The Holy Spirit strives to Unite their Souls to the Lord Jesus, or to tye that most blessed and sacred Knot: But they quench the Spirit, grieve the Spirit, resist the Spirit, in the Discharge of his Office, until he leaves them, and gives them over to their own Hearts Lusts; they must therefore of necessity Perish, in regard the Holy Ghost is the only Agent that must make the Death of Christ Effectual to their Souls; what can a Sinner do, when the Holy Spirit utterly withdraws from them? All spiritual Life, and vital Motions, are alone from the Holy Spirit.

8. They make Light of their own Precious, and Immortal Souls; they condemn and wrong their own Souls: *Prov. 8. 36. He that Sinneth against me, wrongeth his own Soul; all that hate me, Love Death.*

Such that make Light of Christ, hate him; the lesser Love is counted a Hatred, and they do not only hate Jesus Christ, but their own Souls also: To Love the World, to Love Riches, Honours, and Pleasures above Christ; or Husband, or Wife, Son or Daughter, more than the Soul, is to hate and wrong Christ, and that precious Soul God hath given them. Here is a blessed Match offered to the Soul, a Spouse, a Rich and Glorious Husband for the Soul, but the Sinner being led by the Flesh, and by Satan, is beguiled of this inconceivable Blessing: How might a Child see Cause to hate such an Enemy, be it Father, or Mother, and any else, that should persuade it to slight the Offer of a Prince, who makes Love to it, until he is so provoked, that he rejects it for Ever, and resolves to Visit it no more, wait at its Door no more.

9. They make Light of Pardon of Sin, which is only to be had in Christ, thro his Blood, and in obtaining of Union with him. *Brethren*, none ever find Pardon, who make Light of Christ, and of his Invitation to this Marriage Supper.

And, O! what is the State of that Soul, whose Sins are charged upon him, who lyes under the Guilt and Power of his Sins!

10. Their Sin and Danger is great, because they make Light of all the Promises of the Covenant of Grace, all the Promises run in Christ; first they were made to Christ, and then to Believers in Christ. God hath Promised to be the God and Father of all that Love Christ, that Espouse Jesus Christ, and many other Promises there are also: See *Joh. 12. 26. If any Man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there*

shall also my Servant be; and if any Man serve me, him will my Father Honour: What a great Evil is it to make Light of such great and precious Promises! Moreover, whosoever slights and despises the Promises of the Gospel, do Incur on themselves all the Evil, and direful Wrath, that is contained in the Threatnings thereof.

11. They make Light of Communion with Christ: *Behold! I stand at the Door and Knock, if any Man hear my Voice, Rev. 3. 20. and open the Door, I will come in unto him, and Sup with him, and he with me:* But they make Light of this so great a Priviledge; they value not supping with Jesus Christ, Communion with Christ; they slight all those choice Refreshments he affords to them, that Embrace him in the Arms of their Faith.

Moreover, as they make Light of Communion with Christ, so they also make Light of Communion of the Saints, as if there was *no Consolation in Christ, no Comfort in Love, no Fellowship of the Spirit, no Bowels and Mercies; No good Phil. 1. 1, 2.* in Ordinances, no Soul Refreshment in the Holy Sacraments: They condemn the fat things of God's House, Bread of Life, and Water of Life, is not worth any thing with these Persons, their Souls Loathe the Heavenly Manna, they cannot relish Christ's spiced Wine, nor do they esteem of the sweet Juice of his Pomegranates, they prize their Cups, their Merry Meetings with their Ungodly Companions, above the Meetings of the Saints, and all the Joys of Mount Sion.

12. They make Light of Eternal Life, or of the Salvation of their Souls; therefore the Sin and Danger which attends these Persons, must needs be great: Heaven, and all the Glory thereof, is slighted by them, they sell their Birthright (with prophane *Esau*) for a Mess of Pottage; they will not part with their Earthly Inheritance, for the Glorious Mansions above.

That *far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory*, of which the Apostle speaks, is as light as Vanity, in the Judgment of these Persons; and as they make light of all things that are truly Good, really Good, spiritually Good, whilst here, so, I say, they do of whatsoever is truly, and eternally Good, Great and Glorious hereafter.

13. They also make Light of Hell, as not to fear the Pains and Punishment thereof. *They make a lightthing of Divine Wrath.*

They make Light of the Wrath of God, they fear not the Anguish of an accusing Conscience, the Worm that dieth not; nor do they tremble at the Thoughts of that Fire that cannot be quenched,

quenched, the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, is but a Light thing in their Eyes. These things considered, may serve to shew their Sin and Danger is very Great.

14. They make light of the Gospel; such that sinned against Moses's Law, Dyed without Mercy.

Every Contumacious going beside the Law, or casting it aside by Commission of Evil, was Death; no such Contumacious Transgressor could escape God's just Wrath; yet that Obedience the Law required, so far as Men were capable to perform it, delivered no Person from God's most strict and severe Justice: But Jesus Christ, in our Nature, hath answered all the Demands; the Gospel gives Life, though the Law could not: Therefore, to flight this Great, and Glorious Redeemer, must of necessity bring the severest Wrath and Vengeance on all such Sinners.

Sirs! There is no escaping, no avoiding the Righteous Punishment which the Just God will inflict upon all Gospel Sinners, see *Heb. 2. 3.*

15. The danger of such who make Light of Christ, and of the Gospel, must needs be very great, because it is the Rejecting or Casting Contempt upon the only Remedy God hath Provided; they that Sinned against the Law, might Fly to the Gospel; but what will they do, or whether will they Fly, that Sin against the Gospel? Who Tread under their Feet the Blood of the Son of God! O what sore Punishment shall these be thought worthy of? See *Heb. 10. 28.*

29. Hath God sent his Son to be a Sacrifice, to Pour out his Blood to Save them, and shall they make Light of such a Cure, of such a Remedy, of such Grace, and Divine favour! O! How low must such think to Lye in Hell? *Verily I say unto you, it shall be more Tollerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorah, in the day of Judgment, then for that City; for that City, or that People, or Person, That will not hear the Words of Christ's Ministers, but make Light of their Message, or of that Offer, which they in their great Masters Name make unto them: These shall have a Hotter Hell, than the People of Sodom: Sodomy is not so great a Sin as to make Light of Christ, and his Blood; which hath Procured Pardon for all such abominable Sins. There is no Sin, nor Blasphemy either, against the Father or the Son, but the Gospel offers Pardon for: Therefore, such who flight such a Remedy, Procured at such a dear Rate, must needs be (it being a Slighting, or making Light of Christ) the Sin of Unbelief: which is the Worst of all Sins, this is the Root, and Foundation*

of all other Sins, as Faith is the Root of all other Graces; *not one Sin (saith Charnock. a Learned Author) but will be Engendred in the Womb of this Sin, as well as there is not one Grace, but Springs from the Womb of Faith:* Why are Men Proud, Covetous, why do they Swear, Lye, Steal, Commit Adultery, &c. But because they do not Believe, God Hates them, and will Condemn them, they Believe not his Word: Nay, and this Sin of Unbelief, or making Light of Christ maintains all other Sins in their full Strength; as Faith tends to weaken all Sin, so Unbelief keeps every Sin in its full Power: Also it is the great Supporter of the Devil's Kingdom; as Faith overcomes him and his Kingdom; so Unbelief strengthens him and his Kingdom, in the Soul of every such Sinner, and in the World.

16. Their Danger is great; for all the Attributes of God are set against this Man, *viz.* against him that makes light of Christ: Not only Divine Justice, but Divine Mercy, Love, and Goodness also, therefore his Sin and Danger is great: *The Face of God is set against them that do Evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the Earth.* The Face of God may Denote his Glory, or the Perfections of his Nature: All God's Holy and Blessed Attributes are set against those Persons who are Guilty of this Evil. O! It is sad indeed, when once Mercy, Love, and Divine Goodness, pleads against a Sinner; no Wrath like that which is kindled in the Heart of God, for the abuse of Mercy, and Infinite Love and Goodness: *Brethren,* As all the blessed Attributes in Christ meet together, in sweet Harmony, and Unite their Strength to save a poor Sinner, that Believes in Jesus; so they all Unite together, to cut off and destroy for Ever, all such who do not Believe in him, but contrariwise make light of him, and of the Merits of his Blood.

17. The Evil and Danger that attends those that make light of Christ, and of all Gospel Grace, is great; because, in their so-doing, they are Obedient to the Devil; it is his Lusts which they do, and in this he shews his utmost Malice against God, Jesus Christ, and the Sinners own Soul; this is to cast Dirt upon God's Glory, in the Work of Redemption: What is Satan's design herein, but to cause the Sinner, as much as lyeth in him, to render the Grace of God, in Jesus Christ, to be of none Effect; so that his Blood might be shed in Vain: If Satan cannot hinder Men from hearing the Word, he stirs them up to make light of it; and such that so do,

Mat. 10.
15.

do, are Obedient to him, and do his Will, they shew that they are his Obedient Servants and Vassals.

6. From hence it appears, they do, as much as lyeth in them, endeavour to Nullify the Glorious Work of Christ's Mediation : It denies him the Honour of his Meritorious Passion ; no Sin doth so immediately oppose Christ as Mediator, and trample upon that inestimable Sacrifice, as this doth : What, make light of such an Undertaking ! A Work of such a Nature, brought in as the Result of such a Council, Effected by such a Price ; and to accomplish such a high Design, and not value it above one base Lust ! What, choose rather to see a new bought piece of Land, or a Farm, or to prove *five Yoke of Oxen*, rather than to have an Interest in Christ's most Glorious Mediation, Person and Benefits !

Application.

1. *Information.*] We may from hence see the Infinite Patience of God : O ! admire this God, in his Long-suffering and Forbearance !

Doth he still wait upon such wretched Sinners, that thus slight and condemn his most Infinite Love, Goodness, and Mercy ? Is it not a marvellous thing, that God should let such Creatures Live one Day longer ? God certainly bears infinitely more Reproaches and Indignity, by this Sin, than all Men in the World ever bore ; yet he hath as much Patience to bear with them, as he hath Power to punish them : It is not because he wants Power to ease himself of these Adversaries, that he spares them so long ; none but God could endure such Affronts from an Enemy.

2. This Sin is Aggravated by their continuance in this Sin, as God's Patience is greatened, by his repeated Offers of his Grace and Mercy : *He sent his Servants to Invite them : Again, He sent other Servants to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready :* But as often as God Invited them, they rejected, and made light of his Invitation. O, wonder that after the first refusal of Christ, God will send to them again, and again ! and yet doth the Sinner persist in his Obstinacy and Infidelity ; and will God still solicit the Sinner, and call and cry to him ? Yea, Knock again and again at his Door.

3. Here is great Encouragement for the worst of Sinners, to come to Christ, and not to give up their Hope, tho' they have many times slighted, and made light of his Sovereign Grace ;

God nevertheless calls you again : If there were no Sinners called but once, your State perhaps might be lamentable indeed, because some of you have been called many times : Oh ! how many times did some of you that are Believers, make light of Christ, and of his Gracious Invitations, before you were made willing to receive him ? Therefore, let not such that have refused his Calls, Despair of his Acceptance, if they Embrace him now.

4. *Terror.*] It may be, notwithstanding, for Terror to all such Sinners that are Guilty of this Sin, *i. e.* of making light of Christ and the Gospel.

1. Consider, as you have heard, how great this Sin is, and what Dangers you do run ?

2. Is it not irrational, or a most unreasonable thing, to make light of God himself, and *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent* ? Do not you own the Holy Scriptures ? and that the Gospel is a true Revelation of his Eternal Purpose, of saving Men by Jesus Christ ? Do you not own he was put to Death to save your Souls ? and that there is no other way of Salvation ? and is it not a most irrational or unreasonable Act in you, to make light of this Christ, and way of Everlasting Happiness ? Art thou convinced, that there is no other way to save thy Soul from Hell ? And wilt thou make light of this way ? Art thou Wounded to Death ? And art convinced there is no other Balm can heal thee but this ? And wilt thou make light of it ? Art thou convinced that thou art Polluted, and abominable Filthy ? and that there is no other Fountain can Wash and Cleanse thee ? And wilt thou slight, or make light of this Fountain ?

3. Is it not also a most ingrateful Act, or a most unkind Requital of God and Christ, for such inconceivable Love, Grace, and Favour ? What, wilt thou fly in the Face of him, and cast Dirt upon him that wrought out a way of Life for thee, by his own Blood ? Do you not think it was a most horrid Wickedness and great Ingratitude in the *Jews*, who preferred *Barrabas* before Jesus ? And in *Judas*, to Value Christ but at Thirty Pieces of Silver ? And dost not thou know that thou art as Guilty of as great Ingratitude, and casts as great Indignity upon him, that dost value a Soul-murdering Lust above him, that wilt not part with thy beastly Pleasures, sinful Profits, and cursed Companions, for all the Good that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ ?

4. It is also an inexcusable Evil, there is no Plea for this thy great Wickedness. The *Jews* (as one observes) had

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some Plea (tho it would not excuse them) for their great Evil, in refusing of the Lord Jesus, *i. e.* he was cloathed with Infirmities, appeared as a poor Man, and had no Form or Comeliness, or no External Beauty and Glory, as they expected their *Messiah* would appear in : But what Plea canst thou make, since thou knowest he was indeed the Son of God ? They saw darkly, and were under a Cloud, and knew not well the meaning of those Mysterious Types and Shadows : But we see, with open Face, now the Lord is Ascended, and Glorified in his highest Majesty and Glory ; thou dost not doubt of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and yet darest thou make light of this Saviour, and of that great Salvation purchased by him ? Will not thy Misery be great ? Is it not a Just and Righteous thing in God to set thee at nought, or make light of thee, who

hast set him, and all his Counsel, at nought, and hast made light of him ?

5. *Exhortation.*] Strive to be sensible of the Malignity and Greatness of this Sin, and Repent of this thy Wickedness. There may be yet Mercy, if thou dost not further proceed in thy abominable Evil. All thy former Sins shall be forgiven, if thou now dost Believe, and come to this Marriage Supper.

6. This affords also much *Consolation* to Believers, who are delivered from so great Sin and Danger. Oh ! prize God's Favour, who hath dispersed the Cloud of Darkness, which had seized upon your Noble Souls ! what a blessed State are you in, who are pulled out of the Pit, and whose Feet are set upon a Rock, who are saved from Hell, and have an undoubted Title to Eternal Life.

S E R M O N XV.

M A T H. XXII. 5.

But they made Light of it.

D O C T R I N E.

Many Sinners make light of Jesus Christ, and of all the Blessings that are offered unto them in the Gospel.

May 9.
1697.

I Shewed you the great Evil and Danger of making light of Christ, and his Benefits.

IV. I shall shew you from whence it doth arise, or come to pass, that Sinners make light of Jesus Christ ; or give you the Reasons of it.

I. It ariseth, or is occasioned from that great Ignorance, and woful Blindness that is in the Hearts of Sinners.

Ignorance is one cause why Sinners make light of this heavenly banquet.

1. They are Ignorant of that need and necessity there is of coming unto Christ, and so to feed upon the Provision which is prepared at this Marriage Supper. If People were convinced that there was no Corn, no Bread to be had, but at the King's Court, or in his Granary, they would haste thither : Or, That there was no Water, but in the King's Fountain, provided the Granary and Fountain were opened, and free to all Comers, and this was made known by his Proclamation, what multitudes would resort to get Corn to supply their Necessity!

Now, Brethren, it is thus here in a

spiritual Sense ; there is no Bread of Life, nor Water of Life ; no Food for our Souls to be had, but in Jesus Christ alone ; it is in this respect as it was in *Egypt*, there was no Corn in all the Land, but what was laid up in *Joseph's* Hand by the Order of *Pharaoh*, and when the People came to *Pharaoh*, he sent them to *Joseph* ; so the Father sends all poor, distressed and needy Souls to Jesus Christ, the true *Joseph*. But whilst Men remain Ignorant of this, or do not see the absolute necessity of coming to Christ, or of coming to this Marriage Supper, they will not come, but make light of this Gracious Invitation, thinking that they may be provided otherways, or have Peace with God, Justification, Pardon of Sin, and Eternal Life elsewhere, or in some other way : As,

1. Perhaps they think to have it by a sober Life, or by doing that which is Just and Honest in the sight of all Men ; they think this way to be Justified, and Saved for Ever.

2. Others think Inherent Holiness, through Christ's Merits, is that which Justifies them in the sight of God.

3. Another sort affirm, That the light which is within all Men, is the true Saviour ; and that, by Obedience unto that Light, Men may be led into all

The Light within all Men is of the Law of Works.

all Truth, convinced of all Sin, be Justified from Sin, and be Eternally Saved.

Now, Brethren, this is to seek Justification by the Works of the Law; for pray note it well, That the Law that was written on Two Tables of Stone, and that Law or Light which is within all Men that come into the World, is, as to the Matter or Substance of it, but all one and the same Law: Hence the Gentiles, who were said to be without the Law, (that is, without the Law in Tables of Stone, or without the Ministration of it, that was given to the People of Israel) had the Law, or Light thereof, in their Hearts; Which shew the Works of the Law in their Hearts: That is the Sum of the Law, i. e. To Love God above all, and our Neighbours as our selves; or else the Office of the Law, which is Morally and Naturally Just and Good, and to convince and reprove such that walk not according unto it; but if by the Law in either of these Respects, Justification is to be obtained, Christ is Dead in Vain; so that the Ignorance and Delusion of these Men, is very great: For,

1. Their Doctrine teacheth poor People, to seek Justification by the Works of the Law.

2. To frustrate and make void the Grace of God, in sending of his own Son, and so to render his Death a needless thing; for if Christ had not come, all Men would have had the Law and Light within; and if by that Righteousness, viz. by the Law, either without us or within us, we might have been Justified and Saved, what need was there of Christ to come, and keep the Law for us, and to Dye in our stead, to satisfy the Justice of God, for our Breach of the Law? But what the Law could not do, in that it was Weak through the Flesh, God sent his own Son, &c. Therefore it appears, that these Men who are for the Works of the Law, are under the Curse, as the Apostle shew; and evident it is, that, by the Law, no Man is, nor can be Justified: For, if there had been a Law which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law. If there had been any Law, or Light which could have given Life, Justification and Salvation, it should have been by it: And thus these Men, like the Jews of old, being ignorant of God's Righteousness, go about to establish their own Righteousness; Ignorant of God's Righteousness, that is the Righteousness of Christ, who is God as well as Man; and from hence it is, that most Men make light of Christ, and of Salvation

wrought for us by him: The Apostle ascribes it to their Ignorance, and plain it is, it was these our Saviour, in the first place, means in my Text, They made Light of it, and it was upon this Foot of Account.

If I am persuaded, that I have enough Bread of my own, I will not go to my Neighbours Door for it; he that thinks he can Spin a Righteousness to Cloath him out of his own Bowels, he will never go to Christ to Beg a Garment of him, to hide his Nakedness, and so to present him comely in the sight of God. But when a Sinner comes to see all his Righteousness is but filthy Rags, and all his own Food is but Husks as the Prodigal did, he will soon see cause to go to the Lord Jesus, or to go to his Father's House.

2. They make light of Christ, and of all his Benefits also, by reason of their great Ignorance, of the Nature, Worth and Excellency of the Provision which is prepared at this Marriage Supper: Alas! they never tasted how good God, in Christ, is? How sweet his Love and Favour is! how desirable Pardon of Sin, and Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost is! O Taste, and see that the Lord is good! This denotes their Ignorance, or their want of Experience; they may have heard of that great Good which is in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ; but it was only by hear-say; they were Ignorant of it, as to a true experimental Knowledge thereof and therefore may, and no doubt do make light of it.

3. They are also Ignorant of God in the Perfections of his Nature, and blessed Attributes of his absolute Purity, Holiness, Justice, and Righteousness.--- They think that God forgives our Offences, without a plenary Satisfaction to his Infinite Justice, and Holy Law: Nay, and many in these Days are left so to the Ignorance and Blindness of their own Hearts, as to disown all revealed Religion, and hence some have of late affirmed, that there is nothing contained in the Gospel, or Doctrine of Christianity, that is Myste- rious, or above humane Reason; tho' Blessed be God, he has raised up some worthy Men who have been helped fully to confute such Notorious Errors: The Apostle says, Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh, &c. Is not that a great Mystery, that God should be Man, and Man be God, in one Person; that he that made the World, should become a Babe of a Day old; and that we should be Justified by the Obedience and Righteousness of another,

Ignorance of the Nature of Gospel-Provision, one cause Men make light of this Invitation.

Psal. 34. 8.

Ignorance of God's nature the cause why Christ is slighted.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

1 Cor. I.
21.

ther, by a Righteousness Imputed to us. The Truth is, Man is unable to understand, by all his Natural Wisdom, the things of God; as the Apostle shews, *In the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God*: And yet is there nothing contained in the Gospel Mysterious; but Men, being Born under the Covenant of Works, and having some remains of that broken Law in them, they condemn the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, viz: his Great, and Glorious Contrivance of our Salvation, by Jesus Christ; because it is above their Carnal, or Humane Reason to comprehend it.

It is strange to them that we should be Justified, Acquitted, and pronounced Righteous, perfectly Righteous in God's sight, who, to that very time, were Ungodly, and that by the Righteousness and Obedience of a poor Man, Condemned as a wicked Person, or a cursed Malefactor, who was hanged upon a Tree. This Doctrine the Learned *Greeks* of Old accounted Foolishness, and it ariseth from that great Ignorance which is in them, of the Holy Nature of God, and Tenour of his Holy Law; and from hence it is, that they make light of Christ, and of all his Benefits.

4. It may also be thro' their Ignorance of God's Invitation as to them; they do not think that God speaks to them, or that they are the lost Sinners Jesus Christ is offered unto; because perhaps they have got more Righteousness of their own than many others have. They make light of Christ, and of his Righteousness, because they are not Swearers, Drunkards, Thieves, nor Unclean Persons: Possible, some Men may think none need trouble themselves about coming unto Christ, but prophane Persons.

5. Some of them also may be Ignorant of the Voice of God, in the Ministry of the Gospel: They know not the Voice of God like *Samuel*, when a Child, they know not who it is that calls them; *Samuel* thought that it was *Ely* that called him; *Here I am, for thou didst call me*. Many think it is not the Voice of God that calls them; but the Voice of such or such a Minister, not Christ's Voice, but Man's Voice, Man's Invitation; *If thou knowest who it is that saith unto thee give me to Drink*, She knew not it was Christ, the true Saviour, the blessed *Messiah* that spake unto her; She took him to be a meer Man, only one of the *Jewish Nation*: And thus Sinners may think, when Ministers call them to come to Christ, to come to the Marriage Supper, it is nothing more but a Call of Men, and per-

haps they may conclude, that the Servants of God, chiefly by all Preaching, design to Prosylite them to their Opinion; to make them either *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, or *Baptists*, whereas, if they are Faithful Ministers, it is chiefly to bring them unto Jesus Christ, it is to deal with their Consciences; but this they may be Ignorant of, and so make light of this most Gracious Invitation.

6. They may moreover be Ignorant of the Freeness of these good things, to all right Comers; some perhaps may think they may not come, must not come yet; they are not Humble enough, or are not prepared for Grace; the World is too much in their Hearts at present; they dare not come whilst they are so much Incumbred with worldly Affairs; or that they must not Believe in Christ, until they have got a good Degree of Repentance, and Sorrow for Sin; they think that they must bring some Worthiness with them, some Money, or something to commend them unto Jesus Christ, or else they may suppose they do not feel themselves so empty, so hungry, as they ought to be before they come to Eat of the Food prepared at this great Supper; the truth is, none will come to Christ, none will feed on him, or receive him by Faith, but such that see the want, or need of him; it is the thirsty Soul, the hungry Soul that is Invited; but many may look for this to be in them, to a greater Degree than at present they Experience, which may arise from their Ignorance. No doubt but some are more hunger-pinch'd than others, or they may have a more extream Thirst in them than some have, and yet they are Invited; it is not the Degree of the Sense of the want of Christ, as the truth of that Sense they have of the want of him, and of his Righteousness.

Brethren, This Ignorance in some Persons, as touching the way and manner how they must come to the Lord Jesus, may cause them to neglect, or defer coming: What, venture now upon Christ? What, Believe now, before we have reformed our Ways? or have got some meet Qualifications? No, this they dare not do: What so filthy, so unclean, and yet venture to come to Christ? As if great Sinners, such that are most abominable filthy, must not come to the Fountain to be Washed; as if Morality could prepare Men for Grace; or that none but sober Moral Persons ought to Believe in Jesus Christ, and yet he says, that he came not to call the *Righteous*, but *Sinners*; And that the whole need not a Physician, but they that are Sick. Alas, Sirs! all Reformation of Life, Repentance,

penitance, Sorrow for Sin, before Faith, are Dead Works, and profit no Man as to the Salvation of his Soul, all these things are but a Man's own Righteousness, which are but filthy Rags, and please not God; Wouldst thou come in these vile and loathsome Rags, to this Marriage, to be Espoused, and Married unto Jesus Christ? O Blush and be ashamed! Know, O Sinner, that thou must come as a poor, naked, polluted, and undone Wretch (as you have been often told), and yet wilt thou not come to him until thou art more fit, more trim, in thine own Eyes. Believe it is a Delusion of Satan; if thou makest light of this great Truth, thou wilt be found to make light of the Gospel, and of the Free-Grace of God.

From that Enmity which is in Sinners Hearts they make Light of Christ.
Rom. 8.7. *It is from that Natural Enmity, that is in the Hearts of Sinners against God, which causeth them to make Light of Jesus Christ; this is another cause why Sinners do thus Contemn and Despise the Riches and Freeness of God's Grace, in Jesus Christ; the Carnal mind is Enmity against God. Sinners are in Captivity, under the power of Sin, yea, the very Slaves of Sin and Satan; and it is Grace alone that Slays that Enmity, of the same that a Man is overcome, of the same is he brought into Bondage they are in strong Chains (and Fetters, to their own Lusts) and Satan by these Bands and Cords, holds them back from coming to this Marriage, he fills their Hearts with Prejudice to Christ, and stirs up that evil Seed and Principle, which is Naturally in them, to make Light of the Lord Jesus; his own Iniquities shall take the Wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the Cords of his own Sins; he thinks to be Disintangled hereafter, from his Lusts, and from the World, but it is all in Vain; for he is in perfect Bondage, and is neither able nor willing to see himself at Liberty, his Sins hold him fast,*

Sinners make light of Christ from the Inordinate love of the World.
1 John 2. 16. *III. Many make Light of Christ, from the Inordinate Love of this World, in Respect of the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures thereof; there is a Cursed Trinity, as well as a Blessed Trinity, a Trinity Below, as well as a Trinity Above, viz. The Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life; and Sinners Love these, Adore these, and Bow down to these Three, more then they Love, Adore and Bow down to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; Earthly things suit with Earthly Hearts, Carnal delights, Feasts the Carnal part, the Flesh shall be Fed, tho the Soul be Starved, and out of Love to these things, all Spiritual dainties are flighted, and made Light of; they had rather Feast at the Devil's*

Table, than Feed and Feast with the Lord Jesus Christ, they had rather be Feasted with the Sweet Flesh pleasing Meat, Roasted at the Fire of Lusts, and as it is taken off the Devil's Spit, than with the Fat things of God's House. Tell them where they may have a good Bargain, or how to get Riches, and be made great and Honourable among Men, or of a Merry Meeting, to Carrouse, Drink, and be Jovial amongst their Beastly Companions; it is out of Love to these things, that they Contemn all things that are Spiritually good; but let such know that they cannot feed with Christ, and with Devils, *ye cannot (saith Paul) drink of the Cup of the Lord, 1 Cor. 10. and of the Cup of Devils --- No Man can serve two Masters,* That is, who are directly Contrary the one to the other, and have quite Opposite Interests to carry on; *ye cannot serve God and Mammon;* Men cannot Love Sin, Love the World, and yet Love Jesus Christ, *he will either Love the one and hate the other, or Cleave to the one, and forsake (and make Light of) the other,* see once again this Parable as it is Recorded by Luke 14. 18, 19, 20. *And they all with one Consent, began to make Excuse, the First said unto him, I have bought a piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me Excused. Strange! Is this all the business this Man had for to do? It was not to go buy the piece of Ground; no, he had bought it before, and no doubt but he had seen it before too: Men do not use to buy Land, before they have seen it: Here was no Ground to fear of loosing his Purchase, for he had Bought it, but he must needs go again to see it: It ran in his Mind, it had got Possession of his Heart; But is not this a Poor and Lame Excuse? O! For what a Trifle do some Men make Light of Jesus Christ? They had rather go and walk into the Fields, and see their Land, and how their Corn Grows, then to attend upon the Word of God, and to obtain an Interest in the Lord Jesus. And another said; I have bought Five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to Prove them; I pray thee have me Excused, vers. 19. It was not to buy his Oxen; no, but it was to Prove them, no doubt but he had made some Proof of them, before he knew they would Draw; but this shewshow little he valued Spiritual things, and that his Love was set upon the things of this Life. And another said, I have Married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come. Sensual Pleasures drown and swallow up the Hearts of some Men; Carnal Men do not only pursue their Lusts, or do such things that are a direct breach of the Law of God, but also Inordinately let their*
U u u u u Hearts

What small excuses Sinners make to keep them from Christ.

† See Parable of the Sower.

Hearts run out upon Lawful things, a Man may Lawfully Marry a Wife; Marriage is God's Ordinance, but some Men thro' an inordinate Love to their Wives and Children, make Light of Christ, and of all the Blessings of the Gospel: I have in speaking to another Parable, largely opened this, and therefore shall say no more to it here. † Whoredom and excess of Wine, take away the Hearts of some, who like Unclean Birds, choose rather to feed on Carrion on a Dunghil, Then with Doves upon pure Grain; or like Swine, they will not Exchange their Acorns or Husks, for the best Rarities in the World: and others by overprizing Earthly Injoyments, (which are Blessings in themselves) Eternally Lose their Souls; it is no wonder that Men who have sensual Hearts, are Inordinately in Love with Earthly things, make Light of Jesus Christ, and of Union with him.

Self Righteousness hinders from coming to this Marriage, in making Light of Christ.

IV. Sinners make Light of Christ, and of all Spiritual Blessings, from a Conceit of self Fulness; will such that are *Laodicea* like, *i. e.* see no need of any thing, Buy of Christ Gold Tried in the Fire, to Enrich them, or White Raiment to Cloath them? No, they are increased in Goods, and in their own Conceit need nothing; such that have a Fulness in themselves, Bread to Eat of their own, will not come to this Feast: Tell some Learned Men who study Philosophy, and other Humane Arts, and Sciences, that they had better study their own Hearts, and the knowledge of a Crucified Christ; They will but Laugh at you, and make Light of such good Counsel, and perhaps tell you, that you are a Fool: And will you teach them Sirs? As there is a Religious fulness, as well as a Sinful fulness, so there is a Learned fulness, which renders Jesus Christ but of little Worth, and Value with some Men, they had rather Study *Aristotle*, *Seneca* and *Plato*, than Jesus Christ, and him Crucified, some of this sort, study more how to get a Fat Benefice, than to feed on Christ, and Win Souls to him; moreover tell some other Men, who are pure and Righteous in their own Eyes, of the Righteousness of Christ: Alas! They make Light of that, and say, *God I thank thee, I am not as other Men, nor as this Publican*; these Men have such a full Stomach, that their Souls Loathe the Honey Comb.

Prov. 27. 7.

The cares of this Life hinder others.

V. Some make Light of all Gospel Dainties, by reason their Hearts are so full of the Cares of this Life; tell some Poor Men of the Bread of Life? Ah, (saith he) I had rather you could tell me how I may come out of Debt,

and have whatsoever I want for my self, and Family; Intreat them to Believe in Christ, and tell them that the Lord Jesus hath paid all the debts of Poor Believers, and that God is satisfied in Christ; that all that Believe in him are Happy for ever; Press them to come to this Feast, away with those Stories (say they) we can't Sleep, our Hearts are so full of the cares of this World; we fear our other Debts, more than those you speak of, not knowing but we may be laid in Prison ere long: *Martha*, tho' a good Woman, was too Remiss in attending on Christ, thro' the Incumbrances of the World, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and Troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, &c.* Luke. 10. 41.

VI. Many make Light of Christ and Gospel Blessings, by Reason of the sufferings of the Cross, they that Imbrace Jesus Christ, may be undone to be Religious, say they is the way to be Ruined: I assure you say they, in their Hearts, the Food you Invite us to Eat, that is to be had at this Marriage Feast, is but Melancholly Diet, and it will Imbitter all the Comforts of this Life. But alas! All this is because they never Tasted how good the Lord is, they have no experience of that Real Good, and Transcendant sweetness that is in the Injoyment of Christ's Love.

The suffering of the cross, hinder some Men in coming to Christ, and making Light of him.

VII. Some perhaps make Light of Christ, and of this Gospel Banquet, by means of their Carnal Relations, they are afraid to displease them, it will cause (saith a Man) Strife to rise between me and my Wife, or saith a Woman, between me and my Husband, or between me and my Father, and Mother, or between me and my best Friends; by which it appears that they Love Husband and Wife, Father and Mother, better than Jesus Christ. O, saith one, I must Obey my Parents, will you have me to be a disobedient Child, many are like *Ahaziah*, whose Mother was his Counsellor, to do that which was Evil in the sight of the Lord; but know such, who in Religious Matters chose to please their Parents, more then to please Jesus Christ, make Light of those things, and Refuse the offers of Eternal Life: some Parents who are Ungodly, hate the thoughts that their Children should be Religious, and are ready, (like a Wicked Wretch I have heard of) to seek ways to Debauch a Pious Son or Daughter, rather than to see them truly Religious, Wicked Relations, and Ungodly Companions, causeth some to make Light of this Gospel Banquet.

Carnal Relations cause some to make Light of Christ.

2 Chron. 22. 5.

VIII. The

Unbelief
the main
cause why
Sinners
make light
of Christ.

VIII. The main Cause of all from whence most make light of this Invitation, to come to this Marriage feast, is Unbelief. Some believes not what they are told, of the blessed State such are in, who receive Jesus Christ, but are ready to conclude, they are but Fancies, and idle Dreams.

Some others are also under the Power of Unbelief, are ready to say, Tho Christ be a blessed Object, and Pardon of Sin be no small Blessing, yet they are never like to obtain those High Priviledges; No, but seem to say, as some of Old Jer. 18. 12. did, *There is no Hope; but we will walk after our own Devices.* You have here First a desperate Conclusion, *There is no hope;* and Secondly a desperate Re-

solution, *But we will walk after our own Devices.* There is no Hope, that we should obtain an Interest in Christ, and be Justified, Pardoned, and Saved for Ever; No Hope, that we should get our Hearts Changed, or get Power over our evil and abominable Lusts; and hence they slight and make light of all the Means of Grace, they not considering the mighty Power of God, who is able to change the vilest Hearts in the World; but Sin is so Rooted in their Affections, and they withal are Lazy, and Love to Sleep, or abide in a spiritual Slumber, or slothful Condition, and being not willing to strive against Sin, nor attend upon the Word, nor cry to God, they make light of this Heavenly Feast.

S E R M O N XVI.

L U K E XXIV. 21, 22.

So the Servant came, and shewed his Lord these Things; then the Master of the House being Angry, said unto his Servant, Go out quickly, into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither, the Poor, and the Maimed, and the Halt, and the Blind.

THE Rich Pharisees among the Jews made light of it as you have heard, and now the Poor are called. By the Poor, the Maimed and Blind, two things may be signified.

1. The poorer sort, *The Poor have the Gospel Preached to them, and they receive it.*

2. Great Sinners, or such that are in a Miserable Condition, in respect of their Souls, or Notorious Sinners, as *Publicans and Harlots, the Scribes and Pharisees*, making light of the Gracious Offer of Eternal Life; true, all Men Naturally are in a poor, Maimed, and Deplorable Condition; but these no doubt appeared so to be, in their own Sight:

Go out quickly, &c.

D O C T R I N E.

Sinners
must pre-
sently
come to
Christ, and
believe in
him.

That Sinners must presently, without delay, come to Christ, and even as Sinners, as Poor, Maimed, Halt, and Blind.

I have, under another Parable, shewed, what to do a thing quickly doth imply; here it signifies the great speed Sinners should make; they must Believe

presently, without delaying it one Moment; they must not stay to get any previous Qualifications, before they come to Christ.

First, I shall give you a few Reasons, Why Sinners should presently come to Christ, or not delay.

Secondly, Shew, Who are Poor, Maimed, Halt, Blind, &c.

I. Because God (or the Great King that made this Feast) was Angry with others who made light of it, making Excuses, and delayed coming, and for this they were cut off from tasting of this Supper. The base Delays and Trifling of some, provokes God to Anger.

Why Sin-
ners
should
presently
come to
Christ.

II. Because this is Business of the highest Concernment in the World: What, are Sinners Wounded, mortally Wounded, and shall they delay accepting a Plaister presently? What Malefactor Condemned to Dye, would not presently accept of a Pardon, if it be offered to him.

III. Because now *all things are just ready*: Shall God wait, Christ wait the Sinners

Sinners time? Or, Shall not God's time be their time.

IV. Because the Present Time is the Accepted Time: *Behold! now is the Accepted Time; behold! now is the Day of Salvation.* Now, to Day, If you will hear his Voice; if God calls to Day, none must say to Morrow, *Boast not thyself of to Morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

V. Because now is the Day of Sinners Visitation; and if they lose this Day, the things of their Peace may be for Ever hid from their Eyes, as they were from Jerusalem, *O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy Day, the things that belong to thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.*

The Gospel Proclamation runs thus, Quickly, Presently; it Commands Sinners presently to throw down their Arms, and lay hold of the Offers of Free-Pardon now, and delay not.

VI. Quickly, Because Ministers are Commanded to endeavour to bring them in presently; they cannot assure any Person, that he shall be Entertained, or find Mercy, if he delays One Day.

VII. Because the Day of Mens Lives are very short and uncertain: Sinner, thou mayst be Dead before another Day; God casts some off suddenly, therefore thou must presently Close with Christ, or throw thy Soul upon the Lord Jesus.

VIII. Because the Harvest Day, and Gospel Summer may be soon at an end; the length of other Harvest Days may be known, and also Market-Days, but the length of the Day of Grace we know not.

Secondly, Shew, Who these Poor, Maimed, Halt, and Blind are, who are to be brought in presently.

I. The Poor refer to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, or to such that are Sick, and see the need of a Physician, or Wounded and want a sovereign Balm to heal their Sores; that are also Hunger-starv'd, having no Bread of their own to Eat, or nothing to sustain, feed, satisfy, and support their languishing Souls; so that a plentiful Feast of Fat Things, must needs be Welcome to them, tho' the Rich, and Self-righteous Pharisees made light of it.

II. These Poor and Maimed ones see

also, That they are Naked, or have nothing but Filthy Rags to cover them; and therefore are glad to hear there is at this Wedding, a Rich Garment, prepared for all the Guests that are Invited, and that come to it. They see they have nothing of their own, neither to Eat nor to Cloath them, nor a Penny to buy any thing withal.

III. Neither can they Work to Earn any thing to supply their Necessities, being Maimed, Halt and Blind; he is not so Poor and Miserable, though he has nothing, if he can Work, and that way get him Bread to Eat: But these see, that they have Laboured for that which is not Bread, and that which Satisfies not.

IV. Moreover, they are so Poor and Miserable, That they have no Friend nor Brother to do any thing for them; no help by the Law, no help by their own Righteousness, no help from Men, no nor by what any Saints, Ministers, or Angels can do for them.

V. So Poor, Wretched and Miserable, That, besides their present Want, they are in Debt, owing Ten Thousand Talents, and not One Farthing to Pay.

Question. How came they to be in this miserable Condition?

Answer. By Original, and Actual Sin, or by falling among Thieves, who wounded them, and stripped them of their Raiment, and left them half Dead; Sin and Satan are these Thieves.

Question. How come they to see and know this is their sad and deplorable Condition?

Answer. 1. They come to see and know it by the Law, the Law being opened to them, in the Spirituality of it, Sin revived and I Dyed, as to all hope or help by it.

2. By the Revelation of the Gospel, in Christ's Poverty, in his bloody Agony and Crucifixion, they came to see the horrid Evil of Sin; and know, that there is no Help nor Relief, but by his Obedience, by his Righteousness, or by his Attonement.

3. They come to know this to be their miserable State, by the Convictions of the Spirit; When the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall convince the World of Sin; — of Sin, because they believe not in me. The Holy Spirit convinceth these

See the Parable of the Man that fell among Thieves, Luk. 10.

Rom. 8. 2

Joh. 16. 8, 9.

Who the Poor, Maimed, Halt and blind are.

these poor Sinners, that they have no Bread to Eat, no Cloaths, no Garment to cover them, nor any Power or Strength to Work for Life ; and that they can do nothing to wash away the Guilt and Filth of their Sins.

Question. Why doth God bring them to see this their Condition, and send his Servants to call such as these, yea, and with all speed, presently to bring them to the Marriage Feast ?

Answer. 1. Because God would im-bitter Sin unto them, which is so Evil in it self, and was so bitter to his own dear Son. God will make all Men know, what Sin is first or last, either in this World, in a way of Grace and Love, or in the World to come, in a way of Wrath and Indignation.

2. Because the Rich, or Self-righteous ones will not come : They that have a Self-fullness, that find no want in themselves, make light of this Spiritual Banquet, as you have heard : The *Prodigal* thought not of returning Home to his Father, until a Famine arose in his Soul.

3. Because until Sinners are convinced that this is their Condition, they will never value Christ, prize and esteem of the Bread of Life, nor will any but such exalt Free-Grace, and magnify the Lord Jesus ; and then God sends for them in haste, or that they may quickly be brought to Christ ; because otherwise, they will fall under utter Despair, and Satan would get great Advantage over them : They being ready to Dye, are proper Objects of God's Rich Mercy, Love and Favour.

Application.

1. This may tend to humble Proud Sinners, and shew them what a Condition they are in : They will not come to Jesus Christ, they are Blind, Wounded and Wretched, but see it not, know it not, and so are like to Perish for Ever.

2. This also may tend to reprehend such who tell us, That the Elect are not really in a Naked State, Wretched and Miserable, before Faith is wrought in them ; but that they are actually Justified, Healed and Pardoned, whilst Prophane and Ungodly Persons, though they know it not : Can such be said to be Naked and Miserable, that are Cloathed with the Righteousness of Christ ?

3. This shews the absolute Necessity of Christ, and of a vital Union with him ; and also with what speed convinced Sinners should come to Jesus Christ.

4. Moreover, it shews what a wonderful Mercy it is, for a Sinner to be brought to see his Sin, and to have a true and real Sense of his undone Condition : God saith to his Servant, *Go quickly, and bring hither the Poor, the Maimed, the Halt, and the Blind ; these shall come, nay they will come ; God hath opened their Eyes, and wrought a Will in them, to take the Water of Life.*

5. These Souls are willing to beg, they are ready to Starve, and know they have nothing of their own, and so readily go to Jesus Christ for all things they want ; they see Divine Wrath ready to consume them, but are convinced, that, by the Blood of Christ, that Wrath is Quenched, and God Reconciled ; and they being *Maimed*, are in great Pain, and therefore gladly receive a Plaister to heal their Wounds.

And the Servant said, Lord it is done as thou hast Commanded, and yet there is Room, vers. 23.

The poor out-casts of *Israel*, lost Sinners of the *Jews* came in, they Believed in Christ, they came to the Marriage-Supper : But still there is yet room for more, even for poor Sinners of the *Gentiles* also:

DOCTRINE.

Though many receive Jesus Christ, or come to the Marriage Supper, yet there is Room for more still.

First, I shall shew you, What these Words Denote, There is yet Room.

Secondly, Shew you, Where there is room,

Thirdly, Why it is said, There is yet Room ; and shew you, How long there will be Room.

I. This Word Implies, That there is What a certain definite Number, that shall there is and must come to this Supper, *i. e.* yet room there are places prepared for more, doth denote. which are yet Empty.

II. It signifies, That God will have his House full : See *Vers. 23.* That my House may be full, all the Elect must be called, and many of them were among the *Gentile Nations*.

W w w w w

III. It

III. It Implies, either that some who were Called did Delay, or else that there were some that were not yet Invited, or not yet Called, *the Servant was sent again.*

IV. It denotes the largeness, or the extensiveness of God's Love to Sinners; his Love is not extended to all universally, yet it is extended to all the Nations of the World, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also: *Christ was sent to be a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be God's Salvation to the ends of the Earth.* Many have been Called, and yet there is room for Multitudes more, who, in the latter Days, shall be Called, and shall flock like Doves to the Window.

Question. *How may we know in what Nation or Place some of God's Elect are, who shall be Called?*

How we may know in what Nation the Elect of God are
Answer. 1. Where the Gospel is sent, there no doubt are some of God's Elect Ones, be it what Nation, Kingdom, City or Town whatsoever: God will not sow where he knows he shall not reap. O happy *England*, happy *London*, happy *Bristol*, happy are those Cities, that have the Gospel in a clear Ministration; if sent to them, there is a Seed, a Remnant, that God will bring or gather to himself.

2. Where God sows the Seed of the Word plentifully, and brings the Gospel to their very Doors; and also brings Sinners under the Word: This is a sign of Grace to many of their Souls; there is little hopes of them that will not hear.

3. When People give Attention to the Word, hear it diligently, and the Convictions of the Word and Spirit takes hold of their Hearts: When God opens the Heart of a Man or Woman, as he opened the Heart of *Lydia*, to attend upon the Word, 'tis a sign they belong to the Election of Grace.

Secondly, *Where there is yet Room.*

Where there is yet room.
Answer. I. There is Room in the Heart of God, and in the Heart of Jesus Christ. *Solomon*, (it is thought) in his great Love extended to so many, was a Type of Christ; and also, that his loving of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, held forth Christ's Love to the Gentiles: Oh! what Love hath Christ to us Tauny and Sun-burnt Gentiles, that we should be the Darlings of Jesus? There is yet Room in the Father's Heart, and in the Son's Heart, for Thousands of Sinners.

II. There is yet Room in the Election of Grace, that is not full yet; I mean, they that were given to Christ, and chosen to Eternal Life, are not all yet Called: God sees and knows who are his, and who have been Called, and are gone to Heaven, and who are not yet Called, and until they are all brought in, there is Room in the Election for the Conversion of them.

III. There is Room in God's House below, I mean in his Church; there are yet many empty places that must be filled, and God will fill his House with Guests; *Egypt, Ethiopia, Sheba*, must come in; *Turks, Tartars, Pagans* and *Infidels*, shall be Called: *Who are these that fly as a Cloud, and as Doves to the Windows. A little one shall become a Thousand, and a small one a strong People, I the Lord will hasten it in his time.* Isa. 60. 6, 7, 8. Verf. 22.

IV. There is yet Room in the Marriage Chamber, i. e. the Covenant of Grace, into the Bonds and Bounds of which, Jesus Christ will bring all his Elect; they that are decreatively his, and he struck Hands for them, and therefore he will Espouse and Marry them all first or last.

V. and Lastly, There is Room in Heaven, Heaven is not yet full; *In my Father's House are many Dwelling-places*, and not one of them Places shall be long Empty. Joh. 14. 2.

Thirdly, *Why is it said there is yet room.*

Answer. I. Because God would discover his great Love to poor Sinners, even to the Sinners of the Gentiles; and that no poor Sinner might Despair, who is not yet Called. Why 'tis said there is yet room.

II. Because Christ's Mystical Body is not yet Compleat, some Members are yet wanting; all the Branches are not yet Grafted into the True Vine, and Olive-Tree.

III. 'Tis said, there is yet Room, that Ministers may know their Work is not yet done; and therefore, be diligent to bring in all whose Hearts are made willing.

IV. To let us know the great Patience and Forbearance of God, though Sinners still refuse to come in, and accept of Mercy, and persist in their Evil Ways, yet God sends to them, to acquaint them there is Mercy for them in his Heart, and a Place for them, yea, Room enough still in his House.

Question.

Question. *How long will there be room?*

How long there will be room. Answer. 1. So long that God is pleased to continue the Gospel, to this or that Place, Land or Nation.

2. So long as the Patience and Long-suffering of God is continued, or he is upon the Throne of Grace, and is not risen up from his Place, where he sits between the Cherubims.

3. So long as the Spirit of God strives with Men, or with any poor Sinner: When God said, his Spirit should strive no more with the old World, there was no more Room for them in his Heart, no, nor in the World.

4. So long as the Harvest lasteth, and until all the Elect are not Called, and some things are not fulfilled that God hath spoken, even until Christ deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, having finished his Mediatorial Work and Office.

Application.

I. Bless God, poor Sinners, that there is yet Room: O, how good is God, in providing so large a Wedding-chamber! and to extend his Love and Favour to so many! *And the Number of them was* Rev. 5.11. *Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand, and Thousands of Thousands.*

II: Let no Sinner from hence forth say there is no Room; if thou hast got room for Christ in thy Heart, there is room for thee in his Heart.

III. *Comfort.*] *Sirs!* 'Tis a sign you are some of them for whom there is yet Room, for these Reasons following:

1. Because you have the Gospel continued to you; the Kingdom of Heaven is not yet taken from you.

2. Because you (especially some of you) attend upon the Word with Diligence, as Men that are sensible of the worth of it.

3. Because it begins to reach some of your Hearts, and causes you to cry out, What must we do to be Saved?

IV. *Reproof.*] Yet it may be, by way of Reprehension, to such of you that Delay; O, consider you are called to come quickly, presently, and not defer the great concerns of your precious Souls, to another Day; for the Lord's sake take Rebuke: What! will you be like Lot?

V. *Exhortation.*] Haste, haste to the Wedding-chamber, lest you never Eat of the King's Supper, no, nor Taste of it; you know not how long the Harvest may last, and the Spirit of God utterly leave you, and strive no more with you for Ever.

And the Lord said unto his Servant, Go out into the High-ways, and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled, Vers. 23.

I have already opened these Words at the beginning, by way of Exposition. These that are here mentioned are the Gentiles, who were out of the Jewish Church, and Strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, and were afar off, who seemed meer out-casts or Vagabounds, lying in the high-ways, and under hedges. What this Compulsion is we have opened, and shewed, it does not intend outward Force or Violence; our Lord never taught any Spanish Conversion, nor French Conversion; not to Dragoon them, or, by inhumane Cruelties, to compel them against their Consciences; No, this is of the Devil, and not of Christ.

High-ways. Such that go on in the common Road of Sin, or in the Highway to Hell and Destruction, the ways that all the Gentiles walked, before called. From hence, Note the

DOCTRINE.

God extends Mercy to the Worst of Sinners; even to Idolaters.

As all the Gentiles were; even such that sacrificed to Devils: *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles Sacrifice, they Sacrifice to Devils, and not to God.* 1 Cor 10. 20. They had Images, and the Evil Angels answered in those Images, which they called Oracles, and thought it was a speech from God, whereas it was the Devil that Spoke and them they Worshiped; as many of the Poor Heathen do now, whom they call Evil God's, and fear and serve them, more than the God of Heaven and Earth, and yet God offered Grace, and invited such Sinners as these, to come to this Blessed Gospel Feast; which may be great Incouragement to the vilest of Men, to look to Jesus Christ, and not to despair of God's Mercy, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

For I say unto you, that none of those Men which were Bidden, shall Taste of my Supper; That is, none of them, Jews or others, who desired to be Excused; and made Light of the Gracious tender of the Lord Jesus; they shall not Taste of my Love, of Pardon of Sin, of free Justification, nor of any

any other Gospel Blessings, or Privileges ; they shall not Taste of any thing that is truly Spiritually Good ; they shall never see my Kingdom, nor know what Heaven is. O ! 'Tis a dreadful and most dangerous thing to slight Jesus Christ, or make Light of the offers of Grace, or Gospel Invitations ; let all such therefore Tremble, who are found Guilty of this great Sin and Wickedness.

And when the King came to see the Guests, he saw there a Man not having a Wedding Garment on, and he said, Friend how camest thou hither, not having a Wedding Garment, and he was Speechless ?

When Christ may be said to view his Guests.

Question. When may the King be said to come and View the Guests ? Shall any Wicked Man get into Heaven, or into the Wedding Chamber, when Christ comes at the Last Day ?

Answer. No no, the Door will be shut against all Unbelievers then ; therefore it must Refer to the visible Church : Here many get in amongst the Saints, in the Church Militant, who have not a Wedding Garment, and Christ will say unto such, Friend ! How camest thou here, or how gottest thou among my People, not having on a Wedding Garment, or not being Cloathed with my Righteousness ; but appearest in thy own filthy Rags, in my Presence ?

DOCTRINE.

The Lord Jesus takes or will take a view of all his Guests, and if any have not a Wedding Garment, he will soon have his Eye upon such a Person.

In Speaking to this Point of Doctrine, I shall

First, Shew, What a View Christ takes of all his Guests.

Secondly, Shew, Why Christ will or doth take such a View.

Thirdly, Shew, What is meant by the Wedding Garment.

I. Jesus Christ doth and will take a strict View.

Rev. 2.23. 1. He will and doth view their Hearts ; *I am he that searcheth the Heart and the Reins ;* This shews Christ is the most High God, he sees whether all those who are in his Church have changed Hearts, New, or Renewed Hearts, or not, whether their Hearts be Sincere or Upright, or not, whether they have Believing Hearts, or true Faith or not, whether they have humble Obedient Hearts or not.

2. He views their Thoughts, to see *Our* whether evil Thoughts are Lodged in *thoughts.* them or not.

3. He views all the Motions, *Our de-* Councill, Designs, Purposes, Desires, *sires, ends,* Ends, and Aims of all their Hearts. *and Aims.*

4. Christ views the Lives of all his *Our Lives* Guests, or such that are got into his *and Con-* Church, he sees how they Live, and *versations* what Conversations they Lead, how they behave themselves at home, and abroad, when in the Company of Wicked Men, as well as when among his own People ; also he sees what Conscience they make of their Duty, and what Love they have to one another, and to his Poor Saints, and Faithful Ministers, and how they carry it in their Families, The Husband to the Wife, The Wife to the Husband, Parents to Children, and Children to Parents. *All the ways of Men are before the Eyes* *Prov. 5.3.* *of the Lord, and he Ponders their goings.*

5. Jesus Christ views their Principle, whether they are sound in the Faith or not, or hold such Principles and Notions of Christianity as are according to the Holy Doctrine taught by himself and his Apostles, or not ; if any hold Erroneous or corrupt Principles, he sees and knows them, as he did some in the Church of Pergamos ; *Thou hast them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam,* which some think was Marrying with Idolators, others a Community of Women ; *So thou hast also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate ;* That all agree was the Community of Women ; as it is said, *Nicholas* himself prostituted his own Wife to others : Let all take heed what Doctrine or Notions they suck in, and see whether they consist with the Revelation of the Word, the Holy Nature, Justice, Mercy, and Goodness of God, *Christ will Judge the World in Righteousness ;* and though he saves in a way of Sovereign Grace alone, yet he will condemn none without respect had to their Sins, and contempt of his Word ; *He will Judge every Man according as their Works shall be.* *Rev. 2.14.* *Act. 17. 13.* *Rev. 2.12.* If Men, by their Notions, Justifie the Wicked, whom God Condemns, or seek to be Justified by their own Righteousness instead of Renouncing it, and counting it as Dung to be found in the Righteousness of Christ, and so appear before him without the Wedding-Garment, they will be Speechless : Let such that joyn their Faith, and sincere Obedience, with the Righteousness of Christ, in Justification before God, (as they call it) see to it ; Christ sees and weighs Mens Principles, their Spirits, *their*

their Actions ; nay, their Persons ;
Thou art weighed in the Ballance, and art found wanting.

Question. *In what Ballance will Christ weigh Men ?*

Answer. In the Ballance of the Sanctuary, or in the Scales of Truth, Righteousness and Justice ; therefore, he that is put into the Scales without Christ, (or not both weighed together) the Law and Justice of God will find them as light as Vanity ; Justice, the Law, and the Holiness of God, will have full Weight and Measure, thou wilt be viewed and weighed : O Sinner, look well to it, you may be viewed by Men, and pass for good Christians, but may not bear Christ's view, nor his weighing here, nor at the Great Day ; or Men may, on the other hand, Condemn you out of prejudice, and yet Christ may find you sincere, and upright Ones, and Acquit you.

Secondly, *Why may, or will Christ put this Question, Friend ! How camest thou hither, not having a Wedding-Garment ?*

Why the Question will be asked, Friend, How camest thou hither ?

Answer. I. Because none ought to attempt to come into the Church, or to come to this Marriage, without a Wedding-Garment : He alludes to the Custom of the Jews, all that were Invited to a Marriage among them, were to have a Wedding-Garment.

II. Because such is the clear Revelation of the Gospel, in respect to this Matter. What is more fully laid down than this, That no Righteousness of the Creature, no inherent Righteousness will avail any Man ? this is so sufficiently declared, That Christ may, and will say, *how camest thou hither not having on my Righteousness* ; but thinks to be Justified and Accepted by thy own Righteousness, or by thy Works, or by thy Faith and Obedience : Friend, why didst thou not give Credit to my Word and Faithful Ministers ? Christ may say, Did not I tell you, That all that trusted in their own Righteousness should Perish for Ever ? Did not I confirm this Doctrine by Miracles ; nay, by my own Blood ? And, how often did I tell you, That, *Unless you Eat my Flesh and drank my Blood, ye had no Life in you.*

III. Or the Lord Jesus may put this Question to him, because he had on nothing but *filthy Rags* : What a bold and rude thing is this ? Dare you appear, before the Eyes of a Holy God, in these loathsome Rags, who hates all Sin and Filthiness ? O what a pickle

art thou in, and how odious and hateful in the sight of God, and in my sight ?

IV. Or, may be, this Man was One that talked much of Christ's Righteousness, as that only which Justifies a Sinner before God, *i. e.* he might hold that Notion and plead for it, dispute for it, but only pleased himself with the speculative or notional Knowledge thereof, but was no true Believer ; but perhaps one that turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and Sinned because Grace Abounded ; or never regarded Sanctification, in order to a Meetness for Eternal Life ; but perhaps was one that pleaded for an Imputative Sanctification, (as some do now) as if the Personal Sanctification of Christ is Imputed to them, for their Sanctification, as well as his Obedience to the Law, and his Suffering, is Imputed to them that Believe, to Justifie them in the sight of God, which certainly is an abominable Doctrine, and tends to Encourage Sinners in their Sins, and to Damn their Souls ; for without inherent Holiness, or the Sanctification of the Spirit, no Man shall see the Lord.

The Notion of Imputed Sanctification, detected as abominable.

Heb. 12. 14.

Friend ! how camest thou hither ? Such a one as thou without a Wedding-Garment, that spent so much time in Talking of, and Disputing for an Imputed Righteousness, or for a Wedding-Garment, and yet hast it not on, but appears here without it ? What can such a Man say ? he, to be sure, must needs be *Speechless*.

V. Or, Jesus Christ may put this Question well, to such who have it not on, considering what he hath done to procure the Wedding-Garment : He may say, Friend ! Did not I take the Nature of Man, into Union with my own Divine Person, (tho without Sin) that in that Body I might Work out a Righteousness, or a Glorious Garment, for all that I Espouse ? And, dost thou come hither without it ? What Contempt dost thou cast upon what I have done and Suffered ? Did I Live that Holy Life in Obedience to the Law, and Dye in Vain ? for so it will follow, if any other Righteousness, save mine only, could Justifie a Sinner before God. This, my Brethren, is according to what Paul saith ; *For if there had been a Law that could have given Life, Christ Dyed in Vain.* How *Speechless* must this render all that think to be Saved by any other Righteousness, than Christ's alone : Besides, Christ may say, is not my Church and People an Holy Priesthood, and dost thou think that any Holiness,

Gal. 2. 21

X x x x x

liness, save that wrought by my Spirit, or imparted to them, can Sanctify them.

Rom. 3.22 VI. Moreover, was not this Wedding-Garment offered to thee? Is it not tendered unto all? *Even the Righteousness of God unto all, and upon all that Believe.* 'Tis offered to all, but it is put upon none, or Imputed to none, but to them that Believe in Jesus, they and none but they have on the Wedding-Garment; others are Naked, even the Elect themselves before Faith, or before their actual Union with Christ.

Mark. 16. VII. Christ may say, *how camest thou hither?* Thou art an Unbeliever, and did I not say, *he that Believed not shall be Damned?* And dost thou think to be Saved, and make me a Liar?

Thirdly, *What is meant by the Wedding-Garment?*

What the Wedding Garment is.

Answer. You have heard over and over, 'tis the Righteousness of Christ God-man, as he is apprehended by Faith alone; and whosoever hath Christ, Union with Christ, hath on the Wedding-Garment: Some I know would bring Sanctification as here meant; but certainly, Christ's Righteousness only is the Wedding-Garment; whosoever hath Christ on, put on Christ for *Justification*, he hath on the Wedding-Garment. 'Tis said, *The King's Daughter is Cloathed with wrought Gold:* The Wedding-Garment is put upon the Soul, 'tis put upon all them that Believe, 'tis not wrought in them: *The King's Daughter* is also said to be *all Glorious within*; that I conceive refers to the Graces of the Spirit, or to the Righteousness of Sanctification; but the Wedding-Garment is not that Righteousness that is Inherent, or wrought in the Soul, but put upon the Soul; and tho' Sanctification is a Glorious Work, yet it is not perfect in this Life, but Christ's Righteousness is compleat and without Spot, and therefore that which renders the Soul Lovely in Christ's Eye, and so the Wedding-Garment.

Question. *Why is it called the Wedding-Garment? Also, what is the Nature of it?*

Answer. Because I have spoken to it, in opening the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where 'tis called the best Robe, I shall but touch upon this here: But to proceed:

1. It is a *Long Garment*, it covers the Soul (as I may say) from the Head to the Foot; it covers all our Infirmities and Deformities; it covers like a Gar-

ment, all the Defects and Blemishes, Christ's Righteousness covers all our Imperfections of our Graces: O what is there wanting in our Faith? What Defects and Weakness in our Faith? And how Weak and Imperfect is our Love to God, to Christ, and to the Saints and People of God? And who is he so Humble, so Meek, so Patient, so Temperate as he ought? The Sins that cleave to our Graces and best Duties, were it not that God looked upon us in the Righteousness of Christ, we should be loathed in the sight of God.

2. As a Garment is absolutely necessary since the Fall, to cover our naked Bodies, so is the Righteousness of Christ also absolutely necessary to cover our naked Souls; and as Innocent *Adam* needed no Garment to cover his Body, so he needed not the Righteousness of Christ to put upon him, to cover his Soul: The necessity of this Robe came in by the Fall, through our want of a perfect Inherent Righteousness of our own.

3. A Glorious Garment is Ornamental; it makes a poor Beggar that hath it on, to appear like a Prince; so the Righteousness of Christ, put upon a vile and wretched Sinner, puts a Beauty upon him, and renders him like a Prince, or very Glorious in the sight of God; *Thou wast Comely, through that Comeliness I put upon thee.* Ezek. 16. 14.

4. As a Garment defends the Body from the scorching Beams of the Sun; so the Robe of Christ's Righteousness defends the Soul of a Believer, from the scorching Beams of God's Wrath, and also from the fiery Darts of the Devil, and from the Power, Guilt and Punishment of Sin, and the Curse of the Law.

5. As all Old Garments are put off by a Princely Bride, and Esteemed of no Value, in Comparison of a rich Wedding-Garment, that is bespangled with Jewels and Diamonds; so a poor Believer, that puts on this Wedding-Garment, esteems all his own Righteousness but as Dung, in Comparison of this Glorious Robe; *Upon thy Right-hand did stand the Queen in Gold of Ophir.* Psa. 45. 13. The Wedding-Garment renders the Bride amiable, and most lovely in the sight of the Bridegroom, and to rejoyce over her; *And as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so thy God shall rejoyce over thee.* Isa. 62. 2.

This Garment none can tear, neither doth it ever grow old, nor is it the worse for wearing. It is called a white Robe; but though it be so, yet it has no Spot or Stain; nor can the value of it be counted; Nay, let me add, the Holy

Holy Angels are not so richly Cloathed, for they have no other Righteousness, than that of meer Creatures ; but this is the Righteousness of God, i. e. Jesus Christ, the Mediator, who is God over all, blessed for Evermore, Amen.

Application.

1. This may put a Rebuke upon such who attempt to come into the Presence of God without a Wedding-Garment.

2. It also shews the miserable Condition of Hypocrites, who, though they may not be discovered in this World to Men, yet Jesus Christ will find them out, and expose them to shame at the last Day ; Friend, How camest thou hither, not having a Wedding-Garment.

3. Also, by this we may see who will be Rejected, and the Cause of it, in the Great Day.

4. Be Exhorted to seek after and provide the Wedding-Garment : The Damnation of Sinners will not only be for their horrid Sins and Unrighteousness, but also because they trusted to, and depended upon their own Righteousness, good Works, and inherent Holiness.

5. This moreover informs us, of the Happiness of the Weakest Believer ; he that has the smallest Degree of Faith, is in as good a Condition as the strongest Believer ; all are equally Justified, or Cloathed alike ; all have on the Wedding Garment, all are Pardoned and have the same Righteousness of Christ put upon them.

6. O be persuaded to put a high value on this Robe, and fetch not your Comfort and Hope of Justification, and Acceptation with God, from the inward Purity and Uprightness of your Hearts, nor from the Liveliness of your Frames ; yet remember, that all such who are Justified, are also Sanctified ; therefore, Put on the Lord Jesus, and make no Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.

And he was Speechless, Ver. 12.

DOCTRINE.

That when God comes, by Jesus Christ, to Judge Sinners, they will be Speechless, or have nothing to say to excuse themselves, who have not got the Wedding-Garment:

First, I shall prove this point of Doctrine.

Secondly, I shall give you the Reasons of it.

Thirdly, Apply it.

I. Let this be premised, i. e. I do not mean Sinners shall speak nothing to excuse themselves, No, this is not meant when 'tis said *He was Speechless* ; for it is said, some will say in that Day, Lord, we have cast out Devils in thy Name, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works. Moreover, our Lord, in another place, saith, *Then ye shall begin to say, we have Eat and Drank in thy Presence, and thou hast Preached in our Streets.*

My Brethren ! Sinners may speak many Words to Excuse themselves (as I hinted in the Explanation of these Words) one may plead his Ignorance, he was not Learned, and another that he was Poor, and had a great charge of Children to provide for, which took up all his Time and Thoughts ; also another, that he was misled by his Teachers : Moreover, another perhaps may plead his Moral Righteousness, or Sober Life ; Another his External Obedience and inherent Righteousness : But, alas, none of all these things will avail them any thing, they having not got the Wedding-Garment ; therefore they shall be Silenced, *All Mouths shall be stopped, and all the World become Guilty before God.*

Their own Consciences shall accuse them, and put them to Silence, *Their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another, in the Day when God shall Judge the Secrets of Men, by Jesus Christ, according to thy Gospel.*

Secondly, To give you, The Reasons of this Point, and demonstrate the Truth thereof.

I. The First shall be taken from the Justice and Righteousness of God ; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right.* God will be cleared when he Judges, and Justified when he Condemneth ; his Goodness and Righteousness is such, he cannot do wrong to any Man, and this every Man shall see, and be convinced of in that Day ; and therefore, when Judgment passeth, all shall be Speechless, or put to Silence ; hence 'tis said, the Judge will be upon a white

Throne, which Denotes the Justice and Righteousness he shall be Cloathed with, *We know the Judgment of God is according to Truth.— The Scepter of thy Kingdom is a Righteous Scepter.* Moreover it is positively said, *God will Judge the World in Righteousness ; — The Lord shall Judge the People Righteously.*

II. They shall be Silenced, and become Speechless, because of that clear Revelation and Declaration God hath made, of the Necessity of the Righteousness of Christ, to the Justification of a Sinner at his Bar.

1. The

What is not meant by being Speechless.

Mat. 7.22.

Lnk. 13.

26.

What is meant by his being Speechless.

Rom. 3.19

Rom. 2. 15, 16.

Why all Men shall be Speechless in the Day of Judgment Gen. 18.15

Rev. 20.11

Rom. 2.22

Heb. 3. 8.

Act. 17.31.

Psal. 7. 8.

Rom. 13. ult.

The Law lays all Men under Wrath, that Condemneth every Unbeliever ; there is no Cloathing, no Garment to cover their Nakedness, by the Law, nor any standing in Judgment before God, in that Righteousness ; *Now we know, whatsoever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that all Mouths might be stopped, and all the World become guilty before God.* Alas, the Law, or Light within, is Weak through the Flesh, that cannot help nor relieve one Soul ; and therefore God sent his own Son : And God hath plainly, and positively said, *That He that Believes not shall be Damned.* That is, he that flies not to Jesus Christ, or that takes not hold of his Righteousness, and the Merits of his Blood, or wholly does not rest on him, or truly Believe in him, shall Perish. And this Wretch, that had not on the Wedding Garment, Read this Text, and many more of the like Nature, and yet Believed not in Christ, but either trusted to his own Righteousness, to his own Repentance, Tears, Contrition, and Reformation of Life ; or else trusted in the simple Mercy of God, without having a respect to the Sacrifice and Attonement of Christ's Blood : Now this plain Revelation of the Gospel, so often repeated concerning the necessity of Faith in Christ, or getting on the Wedding Garment, will cause every Unbelieving Sinner to be Speechless.

III. They shall be Silenced, considering what the Sacred Scripture testifieth, concerning the inherent Righteousness of the best of Men, calling it *filthy Rags*, and vile Raiment : Now, this being so, shall any dare to appear in those Rags ?

Object. *But it is not in the Power of a Sinner to get this Wedding garment, none have it without Faith, and Faith is the Gift of God ; may not a Sinner plead this at the great Day ?*

Which way Sinners will be Silenced, and left Speechless at the great Day.

Answer. But tho' they know this is so, yet they do not look to God in Christ for Power ; but perhaps think, they may have this Robe without Faith, or else trust to their own Power, and they can Believe at any time, and this will Silence them in that Day.

IV. They shall be Speechless, because their own Consciences will bear Witness against them, that they did not what they had Power to do : Could they not forbear their Swearing, their Lying, their Drunkenness, their Thieving, their Whoring, &c. And could they not attend upon the Word of God ? or go to a Meeting as easily as to an Alehouse, or to walk in the Fields, or be at Home ? Or, could they not give as much Credit to the Word of God, as to a humane History : The Word

faith, *He that Believeth not is Condemned already ; and that he that hath not the Son, hath not Life, but the Wrath of God abideth upon him.* Had they not as much Power to Believe such a Record of God, as to Believe what is told them in humane History. True, 'tis one thing to have the Faith of Credence, and another thing to have the Grace of Faith : But Ungodly Sinners do not act or exercise that Faith on the Verity of God's Word, which they are capable to do ; but rather (by their Pride and Infidelity) seem to declare God's Word is not to be regarded, but look upon it to be a Fiction ; and from hence they will be Speechless.

V. They will be Silenced by those severe Witnesses that will come in against them at the great Day.

1. The Moral Law will be a Witness against them ; *Do not think that I accuse you to the Father ; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom you trust.* The Holy Law will be brought in against them, (by which they thought to be Justified) they having broken it many Thousand times, and are cursed as well as accused by it : Does not the Law require a sinless Righteousness, *This do, and thou shalt Live* : That is, Live and Sin not ? and doth not the Law pronounce Death and Wrath against all that have broken it ? This will Silence all that have no Interest in Jesus Christ.

2. The Gospel will witness against them also, because that discovers there is no other way or Name given by which we must be Saved, but by Christ alone, and him they have rejected ; the Gospel offers free Pardon to all that come to Jesus Christ, but they would not come to him, nor cry to God, to help them to Believe in Jesus, and to change their Hearts ; therefore they shall be Speechless.

3. All the Holy Attributes of God will come in, and witness against Sinners, and put them to Silence.

(1.) Divine Wisdom will Silence them, because that way Infinite Wisdom contrived, to recover lost Sinners, was Slighted, and other ways adhered unto.

(2.) The Truth of God will Witness against them, and make them Speechless, because neither the Promises of the Word were Believed, nor the Precepts Obeyed, nor the Threats thereof Feared.

(3.) Divine Power will come in and Witness against them, because God's Almighty Arm was stretched out, to help and save them, but they did not endeavour to take hold of it.

(4.) Divine Justice will also Witness against

The Witnesses will silence the Sinner in the day of Judgment. Joh. 5. 45.

Who the Witnesses will be.

against them, and exact full Payment of all their Debts, and call for Execution, because the Satisfaction made by Jesus Christ was Despised, and Slighted, they not pleading *that*, for their Discharge at God's Bar.

(5.) The Mercy of God likewise, will come in and Witness against them; because all that Favour, Love and Mercy, let out in and by Jesus Christ, was abused, and abominably neglected: The very Flood-gates of Mercy were opened, yet they went on in their sinful Ways; and because the Sentence against their Evil Works were not speedily Executed, their Hearts were fully set in them to do Evil; and that Goodness that should have led them to Repentance, they abused, and made an occasion to harden them in their sinful Courses.

Christ himself will be a Witness against the Sinner.

Rev. 6. 15, 16.

2 Thess. 1. 8.

Luk. 19. 27.

4. Jesus Christ, the Judge himself, will Witness against them; because against him, his Love and Infinite Goodness, their Sins were committed, they trampling upon his most precious Blood, and disesteemed of all he had done: O then the Lamb of God will appear like a *Lion*; and they will say to the *Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.* As the Knowledge of the Judge is Infinite, and his Righteousness Just and Wonderful, so his Wrath and Fury will be also Terrible, *When he comes in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance upon all that know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:* He then will say, *Bring out them my Enemies, that would not have me Reign over them, and slay them before me.*

5. The Ministers of Christ will be called, it is thought, to Witness against them, who offered Christ to them, and told them what their Sins, and their Unbelief, would bring upon them in the End; but they regarded it not, but, may be, condemned them in their Hearts.

Rom. 2. 15.

6. Their own Consciences, I told you, will Witness against them, and convince them, that the Sentence will be Just and Righteousness; Conscience now reproves them according to its Light, but then all Clouds and Vails shall be taken away, and all these pretended Excuses which now they make, shall be gone for Ever, and they will see it will be in vain to plead their own good Deeds or Righteousness, and much more in vain to plead their Perfections, which some now Boast of; for they will find they have Sinned, and did Sin daily; that they had very Proud, Envious, Lustful, Unbelieving, and Erronious Thoughts; as well as

many sinful Actions; they thought not rightly of Christ, and were mistaken in their Moral and Inherent Righteousness.

Conscience, my *Brethren*, keeps a Record of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions; and in that Day this Book shall be opened; Conscience is Privy to all Evil Thoughts, Evil Words, and Secret Deeds of Darkeness, and will come in and Witness against Sinners in that Day.

Jesus Christ, the Judge, will appeal to every Man's Conscience, whether it be not a Just and Righteous Sentence that he passeth upon them, and all will Justifie him in that Day, *That thou may'st be Justified when thou Speakest, and clear when thou Judgest.* Psal. 51. 4.

Now, from hence, all these Things being considered, every Man that is found out of Christ, shall be Speechless.

Application.

1. Let none think to escape the Righteous Judgment of God, or to hide his Sins from his Eyes: Now you may hide your Sins from Men, but all your Secret Sins will be laid open in that Day.

2. We Infer, that God is very Gracious to discover in his Word how it will go with Sinners in the Great Day; search, and you may know now what your State is, and what your Doom will be then.

3. This Informs also, That the Damnation of Sinners will partly be for their trusting in their own Righteousness, and slighting of the Righteousness of Christ. No wonder that they do not Believe Christ's Faithful Ministers, who tell them of the Danger they are in upon this Account, and of the Vanity of their hopes of being Saved, any other way than by Christ alone, since our Saviour shews, they will have the boldness to plead for their Acceptance some other way, than by his Righteousness, before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth; for this is clearly Implied here.

Terror.

Let Hypocrites, and all Unbelievers, tremble: O! what will you do, in the Day Christ comes to view his Guests, who are without the *Wedding-Garment*? Perhaps you may have something to say now, and may deceive your selves; yet know, that in that Day you will be *Speechless*: Will a Place among the People of God avail you any thing then? No, you will be silenced in Darkeness for Ever.

Exhortation.

Let every Soul Dispair of Salvation any other way than by Jesus Christ; you must Believe, rely upon Christ, be

Y y y y Cloathed

Cloathed with his Righteousness, or Perish ; then Labour to throw your Souls upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and Believe with all your Hearts : But be not Deceived, to think you do Believe, unless you find the Effects of true Faith ; Faith without Works is Dead, it Purifies and Sanctifies the Soul where it is wrought in any Person.

Do not say, Wherefore should you strive to Believe, because you cannot tell whether you are Elected or not ; for if you Believe, this is the way to know you are one of God's Elect : Think not you shall have any Plea, upon the Account of Election, in the Day of Judgment, that will avail you any thing ; what, tho' he hath chosen some Men to Salvation, will he be Unjust in condemning Ungodly Sinners ? No, in that Day you will find all Men will be Speechless, and be convinced, that their Condemnation will be Just and Righteous ; if Men cannot make their Principles comport with the Justice and Righteousness of God, let them conclude they are false Principles ; for they shall find that every Man shall be Damned for his own Sins, and abominable Wickedness, in that Day.

Comfort.

This may be for Consolation to all true Believers, or such who have Espoused Jesus Christ ; you have got the Wedding-Garment, you Love the Person of Christ, you value the Person as well as the Portion, you Love the Image

of Christ, as well as the Righteousness of Christ ; and therefore it appears, your State is happy for Ever.

Then said the King to his Servants, bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter Darknes, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, Vers. 13.

'Tis very Observable, That our Saviour ends several of his Parables after this dreadful manner, to deter Sinners from their Evil Ways ; and to assure them, that Hell is a place of intolerable Misery.

Binding them Hand and Foot, shews the Certainty and Unavoidableness of their Punishment ; the unchangeable Decree of God shall be Executed upon them, and when once in Hell, they shall never come out ; they shall be as unable to deliver themselves, as a Man that is bound in Fetters, and Chains of Iron, can stir or move out of the place where he is cast.

And Gnashing of Teeth, Denotes the great Pain and Anguish of those Torments which they must undergo, for Evermore.

For many are Called, but few are Chosen. Many hear the Gospel Preached, or have the outward Call, *but few are Chosen* to Eternal Life, and so are effectually Called, or find the Gospel come to them in Power, and not in Word only to them : But this being spoken to in the opening of the Parable, *Mat. 20. ver. 16.* I shall say no more to it here.

The Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant.

MATTHEW XXIV. 45, 46, &c.

Who then is a Faithful and Wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season, v. 45.

Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing, v. 46. &c.

Luk. 12.
42, 43.

The occasion of this Parable.

Luk. 12. 41

The scope and design of this Parable.

WE Have the same Parable Recorded by the Evangelist Luke, with a little Difference ; but whether our

Lord spoke it only at one time is doubtful, from the Coherence, or what proceeds in both the Evangelists ; as the occasion of our Lord's speaking this Parable ; the occasion of which, according to Luke, was that Question put forth, by the Apostle Peter, *vers. 41. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this Parable unto us, or even to all ? And the Lord said, who then is a Faithful and Wise Steward, &c.*

As to the Scope or main Design of this Parable, it seems to me,

1. To Excite or stir up all Believers to Watchfulness, and a due Preparation for

our Lord's Coming, according to what proceeds in both the sacred Writers, and the Duty of Watchfulness concerns all Christ's Disciples.

2. Another Reason of it is, to stir up all the Ministers of the Gospel to Faithfulness, in their Places, Work and Office, both to himself, and to his Church and People, whom they have the care and oversight of : Indeed, it chiefly refers to them, and shews ;

(1.) That they are Stewards of God's House.

(2.) That they are Rulers in, or over the Household where they are set.

(3.) To discover the blessed Condition that all Faithful Ministers of Christ are in, and what Happiness shall attend them, in the Day when he cometh.

3. It

3. It also seems to be a Prediction of the Multitudes of unholy, and unfaithful Persons (who call themselves Ministers) that there would be in the latter Days, or a little before our Lord's Coming, viz. such that would be *Drunkards, Gluttonous Persons, &c.* and such also who would smite their Fellow-Servants, or be Persecutors of Christ's Faithful People and Ministers, and that shall say in their Hearts, *The Lord delayeth his Coming.*

4. And to shew what a dismal State they are in, and what a fearful End they may expect to meet withal, at the Great Day, when the Lord cometh: But to proceed, and open the Parts.

Who then is a Faithful and Wise Servant, &c.

The parts
of the Pa-
rable
opened.

Ministers are Christ's Servants, not Lords, but Servants in Christ's House, *Not Lords over God's Heritage*; and ought to be Men of great Wisdom, and of Faithfulness; also St. Luke calls them Stewards, *Who then is a Faithful and Wise Servant, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, &c.*

Every Steward a Lord chuseth is a Servant, but every Servant is not a Steward; and a Steward over a Lord's Household is not a mean Place of Trust, nor is he a Servant of a low or inferiour Rank or Quality.

Whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, &c.

Ministers
are Christ's
Stewards.

All Stewards may not be made Rulers over their Lords Household; but only to perform that part of their Work, or Office they as Stewards are appointed to do, which may differ; some are only made Stewards, to gather in their Lords Rents, others not only do that, but to provide all Necessaries for the whole Family, in respect of Meat, Drink, &c.

Now the Pastors of Churches being made Stewards, have a very great Trust committed to them, in the Absence of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are called Stewards of the Mysteries of God: *Let a Man so account of us, as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.*

1 Cor. 4. 1.

A Minister is a Servant, so that the Honour that principally belongs to his Master, he must not take to himself, yet Ministers, being Christ's Stewards, and also his Ambassadors, there is Honour due to them, as they represent Christ's Person; and such that Despise, Slight, and Contemn them, they will be found to Despise, Slight, and Contemn the Lord Jesus Christ; like as all Princes look upon themselves Slighted or Condemned, when their Ambassadors are Slighted, &c.

Made Rulers over his Household.

Not over Households; no Steward of Christ is a Steward or Pastor of more

than one Church; they must meet, be fed, and worship God altogether.

Whom he hath made, &c. Men are made Ministers and Rulers by Jesus Christ. It is the Lord Jesus that gives them all their Ministerial Gifts, and Divine Graces, Eph. 4. 8. *When he ascended on high, he gave Gifts to Men, &c.* Moreover, Authority to Preach, and take care of the Church of God, is given to them, by Jesus Christ: He hath left Directions about the choice of his Ministers, that are to be Bishops or Overseers, how they ought to be Qualified, and how, and by whom (in his Name) to be ordained, *By Prayer and laying on of Hands.*

1 Tim. 3.

1, 2, &c.

Act. 13. 3.

1 Tim. 5.

22.

1 Tim. 4.

14.

The Rite of Laying on of Hands, (and not lifting up of Hands only) was the way of Investiture into Office, under the Law, as well as under the Gospel; *Moses* Deut. 34. 9 laid his Hands upon *Joshua*.

DOCTRINE.

A Minister of Christ is his Steward, and is intrusted with the Household of Christ, and all he hath.

In speaking to this, I shall,

1. Shew, *What Christ's Ministers are intrusted with.*

2. Shew, *What Ministers may be said to be Stewards and Rulers.*

3. Shew, *What is required of them; or shew, Who are Faithful Servants.*

I. Ministers are intrusted with the Gospel, called *the Mysteries of God*. The Gospel is committed unto them, I mean a Ministration of it, even all the whole Doctrine thereof, to study, open and publish it unto the World, and unto the Church of God, especially to that Household they are made Stewards of.

II. The Administration of all the Sacred Ordinances of the Gospel, is committed unto them, particularly the Ordinance of *Baptism* and *Breaking of Bread*, and the to pronounce Church Censures.

III. The care of the Church, or whole Household, where they are Stewards, is committed unto them, *Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, &c.*

Act. 28.

28.

1 Pet. 5.

1, 2.

IV. The Souls of every particular Member is committed to them where they are placed, by the Lord Christ, *They watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account.*

Heb. 13.

17.

Secondly, *What Ministers may be said to be Christ's Stewards, and Rulers of his Household.*

Ans. Ministers are of two sorts.

1. Such who are only Teachers, who Preach by Virtue of their Gifts Christ hath given them, being regularly called so to do.

Two sorts
of Mini-
sters in the
Church.

2. Elders or Pastors; now, they that are Pastors, only are made Stewards and Rulers over Christ's Household; the trust
or

Act. 20.

28.

1 Pet. 5.

1, 2.

Heb. 13.

17.

Teachers
as well as
Pastors are
left in the
Church.
Eph. 4.11.

or care of the Family may not be committed to every particular Teacher in a Church; No, it is the Pastor only that is the chief Steward and Ruler therein.

Question. *What Authority then have Men to Preach, besides ordained Pastors or Bishops.*

1. Answer. Christ hath not only left Pastors in his Church, but Teachers also, *he gave some Pastors and some Teachers*: These two remained in the Church, when the extraordinary Gifts and Offices and Officers ceased, as that of *Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets.*

If Christ gave some Teachers to his Church, besides Pastors, then such to whom he hath given Ministerial Gifts unto, may and ought to Preach, but the former is true; Ergo.

1 Pet. 4.10

2. Such that have those Ministerial Gifts, may and ought to Preach, tho' not ordained Ministers or Pastors, because they are required so to do; *As every Man hath received the Gift, even so Minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*: Some that oppose this, would have the Gift here mentioned, to mean common Gifts that every Parent or Master of a Family hath received, or any Gift or Ability whereby he may be serviceable to the good of others, but do these of all turns of whom they speak, speak as the Oracles of God; see the very next Words, *If any Man speak, (that is teach) let him speak as the Oracles of God.*

1 Tim. 3.

2.

Tit. 1.9.

3. There can be none chosen to be Overseers, or Pastors, if there are no Teachers besides Pastors in the Church, because a Bishop or Overseer must have (among Qualifications) this one, *viz. he must be apt to teach, and also by sound Doctrine, be able to convince Gain-sayers*, therefore there are Teachers left in the Church, and ought to be trained up there, and due Encouragement given to them, besides Pastors, and the Consequence of denying it, would be pernicious to the Churches of Christ. What Church dares utterly dispence with one of the Qualifications of a Pastor or Bishop.

4. Men are exhorted to covet the best Gifts, but rather that they may Prophecy, that is, Teach or Preach the Gospel; but why should Men desire such Gifts, if they may not be allowed to Preach?

Question. *Who have Right, or Authority to Preach the Gospel, as Teachers?*

1. Answer. I answer first Negatively. Not all who have Humane Learning, or the Knowledge of the Tongues, altho' they may be set apart by Men, to Preach; for *Papists* and prophane Persons may have Learning, and take their Degrees in Universities, but doth that make them Ministers of Christ, or give them a lawful Call and Authority to Preach? Christ

my Brethren, hath not appointed such Men to be his Ministers; no, nor is the Knowledge of the Tongues any of the Qualifications either of a Teacher, Bishop or Overseer: See 1 Tim. 3. Tit. 1: in which two Chapters, all the Qualifications of Pastors are left upon Record.

2. Nor hath Christ ordained Universities, or Schools of Humane Learning, to train up Ministers, neither can that qualify, or authorize any Man to be a true Minister; if the Word of God be a sufficient Rule, (as certainly it is in this great Case) for what can any Man living say to the contrary, from God's Word, or confute what I say? Tho' I am no Enemy to humane Learning, but have often wished (if God saw it good, and it might tend to his Glory) that all that are true Ministers had the Knowledge of the Tongues, but perhaps God hath on purpose chose such who are *base things*, or Men Unlearned, to confound the Wise and Learned, *That no Flesh should Glory in his Presence, but that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord.*

Learning is good, if not abused; it is a good *Hand-maid*, but a bad *Mistress*: It is indeed a shame to some that have lately rendered Men, who have not the Knowledge of the Tongues, unfit to Preach, as if they could not speak Sense, or good English, nor understand the Scripture; and what is this but to magnify such Learning above the Spirits teaching, and the Gifts of Men above those Ministerial Gifts given by Jesus Christ.

3. Man ought not to Preach, to whom Christ hath not given Ministerial Gifts unto, and capacitated to open the Word of Life. 'Tis one thing to do it by Art or by humane Learning, and another to do it by Vertue of that Gift God hath given to a Man; and he cannot be a Minister of Christ, whom Christ never gave Gifts to, nor Authorized to Preach the Gospel: But,

Secondly, And in the Affirmative.

The Call to the Ministry is either extraordinary or ordinary: But none now pretend to have an extraordinary Call, unless they are some Impostors that are crept up of late times; but unless they could work Miracles, no Wise Men will regard what they say or affirm, on that Account.

1. Therefore, a true regular Call to the Ministry lyes in a true Church of Christ; and indeed, the Churches are Christ's Universities, where all his Ministers ought to be trained up.

1. God Converts this or that Man; he gives them his Spirit, his Grace, and also Ministerial Gifts, of which Gifts the Church is the proper Judges.

2. When Gifted, or thought to be Gifted, the Church may, nay ought to admit

Humane Learning and a Call neither qualifies nor can give any Man Authority to preach the Gospel.

1 Cor. 1. 29, 31.

An extraordinary, and an ordinary call to the Ministry.

admit them to exercise their Gifts, and try them, nay try them again and again, *Let the Prophets speak two or three, (though one by one) and let the other Judge: As extraordinary Gifts were then to be tried by the Church, so ought ordinary Gifts now.*

Question. *What kind of Persons ought Teachers to be?*

What kind of Men Teachers, who are not Pastors, ought to be. 1 Tim. 3. 6

Answer. 1. They ought, as I told you, to be such that are look'd upon to be truly Gracious, giving no just Cause to the Church to judge otherwise, but that they are Regenerated Persons:

2. They ought to be humble Men, 'tis dangerous to encourage a Proud Conceited Young man, who is already lifted up, and appears to magnify himself above others: No, he must be nothing in his own Eyes, or not conceited, but willing to submit to better Judgments, wherein he differs from others: What fearful Work have some Conceited Young-men made in the Churches? and what Dishonour brought to the good ways of God.

Verf. 7. 3. One of a good Report of them that are without, that the Name of God be not Evil spoken of.

1 Pet. 5. 2. 4. One that there is good Ground to Believe, doth not take up the Ministry for filthy Lucre sake, or for Profit, as he doth it not for Applause; tho' if wholly taken off of all worldly Business by a Church, he ought to be Maintained, as God hath ordained; but not until then ought he to throw off his Calling, or not till he hath a good and warrantable Call so to do.

1 Tim. 3. 9. 5. One sound in the Faith, holding all the Essentials of true Christianity, and a Man of good Understanding in the Mysteries of the Faith, or else how shall he feed others with Knowledge and Understanding?

Jer. 3. 15. 6. He ought to be of a peaceable, quiet and condescending Spirit, and a holy and good Life and Conversation.

Question. *What Cause or Reasons are there to encourage gifts, or to train up Teachers in the Church?*

1. Answer. Because what Ministerial Gifts Christ hath given to any Man, he gave them to the profit of his Church, and good of Sinners.

2. Because the Labourers are but few, and yet the Harvest is great; and if upon that account, we are to pray to the Lord of the Harvest, to send Labourers into the Harvest, much more when he hath sent them, we ought to call them forth, and encourage them to Preach.

3. Because if otherwise, what will become of the Churches in future Times, when the Labourers we have now are called Home? Tho' God can find Labourers it is true, yet ought not we to use the Means he directs us to use?

4. Because all that have received Ministerial Gifts, are but Stewards of those

Gifts, and God will call them to give an Account, about their improving them in the Great Day.

Objection. *Those that are called may be Weak at first, and so it may not be Honourable to imploy them.*

1. Answer. They should be Imployed privately at first only in the Church.

2. Christ hath, out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, perfected his Praise.

3. Many now perhaps that are able Ministers, were at first very weak; and had not they been Encouraged, what a wrong might it have been to the Church of God, and, as the Proverb is, Use makes Perfect.

Objection. *But they are Trades-men, Husbandmen, and may such Preach, are they Ministers?*

1. Answer. Was not Moses a Shepherd, tho' brought up in Pharaoh's Court, yet before Called, he kept the Sheep of Jethro, his Father in Law, Exod. 3. 1. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of Fire, out of the midst of a Bush. And was not the Prophet David also a Shepherd, before he was Called; and Amos an Herds-man; and were not some of the Apostles Fisher-men, Matthew a Toll-gatherer, and Paul a Tent-maker, and wrought at his Trade after Called to be an Apostle: Nay, 'tis thought, our blessed Saviour himself was a Carpenter; is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary? Our Annotators conclude he might work at that Trade until he was Thirty Years old; for he began not his Ministry until he was about that Age: "And, say they, it is not probable that he lived all those Years in Idleness: No doubt they cry'd, The Carpenter is a Preaching; and this might cause our Lord, in the very next Verse to say, A Prophet is not without Honour but in his own Country, and among his own Kin, and in his own House.

You that condemn Trades-men's Preaching, may be would (had you lived in those Days) condemned the Ministry of our blessed Lord, and that of his Disciples; take heed what you do.

Objection. *The Churches may not be capable to provide a sufficient Maintenance for them; 'tis well if they can provide well for their respective Pastors.*

1. Answer. The Maintenance of Gospel Ministers, is laid down as fully in the New-Testament, as any one Duty: But as you heard the Ministry consists of two parts.

1. Such who Preach only by Vertue of their Gifts.

2. Such who are wholly set apart, and ordained to Preach, Watch over, and take the care of a particular Flock; now these being discharged from all secular Business, and must not intangle themselves with the Affairs of this Life, must be

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pro-

Object-ions answered, about encouraging the Gifts of the Church.

Mark 6. 3. Paul's Annotations on Mark 6. 3, 4.

1 Tim. 2. 4

provided for, if the Church be able ; but such who are only *Gifted Brethren*, may follow their Callings, and ought not to expect a Maintenance, except a Church need all their time, and being able to provide for them, do take them off of their Trades, then they must provide for them also.

I fear one thing that greatly hinders the flourishing of our Churches, and obstructs some Men who are Gifted, from exercising their Gifts, is that great neglect of the present *Pastors*: Should we be called, say some, to that Office, we and our Families may be exposed to want, or to many Straits, as we see others now are : O, what Provision did God make for his Ministers under the Law, and to be sure he would have his Gospel Ministers as well provided for ! Such Churches who are Rich and do it not, are under great Evil : *Who goes a Warfare at his own Charges ? who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof ? Or, who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock : — If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things ? Are not you more obliged to us, than we to you ? as if our Apostle should say, what is it we receive from you, in worth or value to what you receive from us ? If you have our Gold, shall we be denied your Copper ? There is a far greater Disparity, between spiritual and carnal things. Do you not know, that they that Minister about holy things, live of the Temple, &c. even so hath the Lord ordained, that they that Preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. Again saith our Apostle, Let him that is taught in the Word Communicate to him that taught him, in all good things. Shall poor Ministers, who Labour to feed our Souls, not have Bread, and any good things, to feed, nourish, and refresh their Bodies, with their Wives and Children ; God forbid : Certainly, they little prize either their Souls, or Soul-food, that shew no Love to Christ, or his Ministers.*

Tho' it is an abominable Evil to undertake the Ministry for *filthy Lucre*, yet it is equally as great a Sin, and shame not freely and plentifully to Minister to them who are discharged from all Trades and Callings, to provide for themselves : O, how have the Widows and Children of some Ministers suffered, thro' the neglect of this Duty : 'Tis not enough, that you hand out to your Ministers just enough to them to keep them alive, but that they may be able to give, and provide for their Children.

Object. *But some Young-men, who have entered on the Ministry, have brought great dishonour on the Name of God and Religion, partly for want of Parts and Abilities to Preach, and partly by their scandalous Lives.*

1. Answer. So have others, who are Learned, many of them also being Ignorant, or wanting both Grace and Gifts, both these ways you speak of have brought great Reproach on the Name of God, if not among us yet among others.

2. Must not sincere and able Persons be Encouraged, because Hypocrites get into the Ministry, to the dishonour of God.

3. The fault may perhaps lye in the Churches, who suffer such to Preach whom Christ hath not given Ministerial Gifts unto : Indeed, some of late as well as formerly, run before they are sent, or Preach before approved of by any true regular Church, or are allow'd to Preach ; such ought to be silenced, and 'tis a shame to them that countenance such ; and for Christ's sake let Churches, and Pastors of Churches, see well to this, and labour to prevent this Evil for time to come, that so none may be allowed to Preach publicly, but such who are of spotless Lives, (though they may be unjustly Reproached) and able to Preach, to the Honour and Credit of Religion : 'Tis not every one that thinks he has a Gift that is to be allowed to Preach, or called to the Ministry, and how shall they Preach, *except they are sent ?* Rom. 10.

Object. *But some are very Young, that are called out to the Ministry.*

1. Answer. Wisdom is not always with the Aged.

2. Christ called John when Young, Samuel when Young, and Timothy when a Youth ; Let no Man despise thy Youth.

3. Commonly those Ministers who entered when Young on the Ministry, have proved most Honourable and Eminent in the Ministry.

Thirdly, *Who are Wise and Faithful Stewards of Jesus Christ.*

1. Answer. Such who dearly Love their blessed Master the Lord Jesus Christ, who serve him because they Love him ; not by constraint, but of a ready Mind ; not for *filthy Lucre*, but in Love to Christ's Person, and his Name, Truth and People ; Simon, Son of Jonas, *Lovest thou me, feed my Sheep.* Christ would imploy none to feed his Lambs, but such that Love him and them.

2. Such that serve Christ in all Humility ; a Proud Person is no ways fit for this Sacred Work and Office : He that is Wise, and will be Faithful, is nothing in his own Eyes ; *To me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I should Preach among the Gentiles, the unspeakable Riches of Christ.* Eph. 3.

A Servant is a Name of Subjection, 'tis a shame for such to be as Lords over God's Heritage, or seek for the Preheminence above their Place and Station ; a Faithful Steward of Christ esteems it a greater

Some Preachers not sent of God, nor ought to be encouraged.

Who are Wise and Faithful Stewards of Christ.

Joh. 21. 16

greater Honour to be Christ's Servant, than to be an earthly Prince: Indeed, it is a Contradiction to say, such a one is a Proud Christian; for he cannot be a true Christian, much less a true Minister, that is not Humble, *Learn of me, for I am Meek and Lowly in Heart, &c.*

Mat. 11.
29.

3. A Wise and Faithful Steward of Christ is Sincere, he serves him with a Perfect Heart: David had many Infirmities that God overlook'd, because his Heart was upright in the sight of God.

Act. 20.
20, 26, 27.

4. A Faithful Steward of Christ is Universal in his Obedience, he will feed his Master's Household with all that Food his Master hath provided or appointed for them; he will not come under a Promise to please Men, to keep back any one Truth or Ordinance of Christ, or forbear to Preach it, lest it offend some that do not see it to be their Duty; *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; -- Wherefore I take you to Record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men, -- for I have not shunned to declare unto you, the whole Counsel of God.* Again he saith, *Do I seek to please Men, for if I yet please Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ;* that is a Faithful Servant: Let such who promise not to Preach up some one Ordinance or another to please Men, from hence see their fault and be ashamed.

Gal. 1. 10.

6. A Faithful Servant or Steward feeds the whole Household, therefore must have them every Meal all together if possible. He must give every one Meat in due Season, that is, every Lord's Day; therefore he is not to have two Households to feed, whom it is morally impossible to feed, or give their Meat to in due Season, and how is a Faithful Steward of Christ's Household grieved, when he perceives many of the Family are missing, when he gives forth the Bread of Life to the Household? This makes him to complain to his Master, to see such and such Places empty.

7. A Faithful Steward of Christ seeks the honour of his Master in all he doth; not his own Glory, nor his own Interest; no, but the true Interest and Glory of Christ; and thus our Lord did, *I seek not my own Glory, but the Glory of him that sent me.* All his Wisdom, Parts, Knowledge, &c. is able to do, he ascribes to Christ alone, and acknowledges, he can do nothing without the Lord Jesus, nor will he add to, nor diminish from, or alter any thing which his Lord commands.

See the Parable of hiring Servants into the Vineyard opened, Mat. 20.

8. A Faithful Steward rejoiceth to see Love and Union in Christ's Family, all drawing together, *Like the Horses in Pharaoh's Chariot;* and every one doing their Duties, and in bearing their Burdens, so that there is an Equality.

Isa. 40. 10.
11.

9. He that is a Faithful Steward, sees to take care of the weak Babes, or little Children that are in his Master's Family, and, like his Lord, he *gathers his Lambs in his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom.* He strives to support the Weak, and strengthen the Feeble-minded.

10. He is Constant and unwearied in his Work; he Faints not, tho' he meets with many Difficulties, Reproaches and Abuses from some in the Family, as well as from others, *We therefore Labour and suffer Reproach, &c.* He will not decline in his Work in a Day of Persecution, nor withhold Corn from his People, tho' it exposeth him to the loss of his Liberty, nay, to the loss of his Life.

Lastly, He that is a Wise and Faithful Steward of Christ, Labours to have his Accounts to give up to his Blessed Lord, that he may be accepted of him when he comes again.

Why Pastors of Churches are called Rulers, Read Dr. Goodwin's last Folio on Discipline.

Question. *Why is a Steward, or Pastor of a Church, called a Ruler?*

Answer. First Negatively. Not that the whole Government of the Church is committed to him; he is not to Rule without the Brotherhood; *If he will not hear the Church, Mat. 18. 17. 'tis not said, if he will not hear the Pastor.*

1. But in the Affirmative, he is Invested with Authority or Power, as the chief Ruler in the Church, tho' there be *helps of Government*; and for any to plead for an absolute or sole Power of Rule and Government, to be in a Pastor, that tends to expose the Church and Members thereof to Tyranny, or to the Will of the Pastor, and so a worse Government in its Nature, than many Civil Constitutions among Men. In a particular Church rightly Constituted, is the fixed Seat and Subject of all Ordinances of publick Worship, and hath the Seat of all Officers, or Organical Members, that serve for the Use of the whole; and that these with their Officers, have the Seat of that Government that is Judicially to bind or loose the Soul. The Government of Christ's Household is ordained or appointed by himself, and not left to Men to Order and Govern it as they think good.

Dr. Goodwin on Discip. pag. 3.

2. A Ruler is to Govern by the Law, and the Constitution of the Land, City or Corporation, where he is placed, and so an Elder must Govern according to the Gospel Constitution, or Laws and Rules left by Jesus Christ.

3. Some Rulers, or chief Magistrates, can pass no Act, Law or Sentence, without the People, either to acquit, or condemn. (according to the Constitution of the Government) it must be with, and by their assent and consent: So the Steward or Pastor of Christ's Household, can pass no Act, to receive in, or cast out, &c. without the assent and consent of the Church.

4. A Ruler, that Rules well, is worthy of due Honour: So ought a Faithful Ruler of Christ's Household to have due or double Honour; yet know, there are some great Disparities, between some earthly Rulers and Christ's Stewards or Pastors of Churches, for they are not Lords, &c. ^{1 Tim. 5. 17.}

5. A Ruler ought to be a Man indewed with much Wisdom and Humility: So ought a Pastor or Steward of Christ's Household.

6. In most Constitutions, there is one chief Ruler who is to be obeyed, &c. So Christ hath made the Steward of his House a chief Ruler, and commands all the Family to obey him, *Obey them that are over you.*

Heb. 13. 17

Hath made Ruler of his Household.

Note from hence,

Doctrine. *That a Church of Christ is his Household.*

1. I shall hint a few things to shew, *Why a Church is compared to a Household.*

2. Shew, *What a House or Household it is.*

1. In a Household are Persons of different Ages, different Tempers, Strength, &c. So in a Church there are little Children, or Babes in Christ, and also Young-Men, and Fathers; some Strong, and others Weak, and some of a Mild Spirit, and others Froward, which renders it the more hard and difficult for the Steward of his House to please them all, and rightly to demean himself as a Wise and Faithful Person in his Place and Office.

The Church is Christ's Household.

2. What is done in a particular Family ought not to be published abroad by any of the Household, and if any do it, it is a shame and reproach to them: So it is a shame and reproach to any Member to publish to any out of the Church, what is done therein.

Church Matters not to be spread abroad.

3. Every Family is under the Government of him who is the chief Ruler, and all ought to be in Subjection according to his good Government: So ought all Members of a particular Church, to adhere to the good Government of Christ's Steward, or Pastor of his Church.

4. 'Tis a great Honour to a Household, when 'tis well Governed, all knowing their Work and Places, and living in Love together: So nothing is more Honourable or Lovely, to see a Church well Governed, all adhering to the Majority, and Government of it, striving to keep the Unity

ty of the Spirit in the Band of Peace, living together in Love, and Condesension to each other.

5. The whole Household ought to be together at times of Family Duty, and also at Meals if possible: So ought every Member to be together in the publick Worship of the Church, and when the Steward gives forth the spiritual Food of the Word in due Season, to every one.

6. The Steward of the Household is to see good Order kept up in the Family; and so ought the Steward of Christ's Household, to see and labour that good Order and Discipline be kept up therein, according to the Rules his Lord hath appointed.

2. What a House or Household is it?

1. Answer. It is a spiritual Household, *Ye also are built up a spiritual House, an Holy Priesthood.*

2. It is a great and noble Household. 1. It is called the Household of God, therefore a noble House, *Ye are fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God.* As the Universal Church is God's Household, so is every particular Society, or Congregation of Christians. 2. God himself is the chief Householder, he is the Master and Owner of this Household. 'Tis by his Laws it is Governed. 4. They are all his Children and Servants, who are the true and proper Members of this Household. 5. God himself dwells there in, *Here I will dwell for ever, for I have desired it, &c.* 6. It is a noble and glorious House, because it is the place where God's Honour dwelleth; and an Household where the Glory and Beauty of the Lord is seen.

3. It is a Household beloved of God, *The Lord loves the Gates of Zion, more than all the Dwelling places of Jacob.*

4. 'Tis called, the Household of Faith. There the true Faith of the Gospel, and the true Worship of God, is Maintained.

5. Christ's Household is under a special and peculiar Government from all other Households whatsoever, (tho' others may call themselves by his Name) its Rules, Laws and Discipline agreeing exactly with the Institutions and Appointments left by Christ in the New Testament, and with the Pattern of the Primitive Churches: This Household will not admit of any humane Rites or Traditions whatsoever. This Household will not suffer any to alter or change any of the Rules of its ancient Government, nor receive in the carnal Seed of Believers as such; but all that are admitted to be of this Family, must be qualified according as their great Lord hath left Directions in the Gospel. True, under the Law God's Household consisted of all the natural Seed of Abraham, or the whole House of Israel, according to the Flesh, that being a National Church, *But old things are now past away, and all things are become new.* According as the first Gospel Church was gathered, *Acts 2.* and constituted, so is, and ought every true spiritual and Gospel Community, or Congregation of Saints now; we read, not of one Infant that was admitted into any one of the Apostolical Primitive Churches: No, none but such who, upon the Profession of their Faith, were Baptized.

Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. --- Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over all his Goods, v. 46, 47. Or as in v. 21. I will make him Ruler over many things.

1. This shews how exceedingly the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased with those Ministers or Stewards of his, who are Faithful in all things, in the discharge of that great Trust committed to them.

2. That Christ's Faithful Ministers shall receive no small Honour, but be greatly exalted in the Day when he appears, *They that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for Ever and Ever.* All Believers shall receive great Glory, but Ministers, who are Faithful, shall excell in Glory.

But if that Evil Servant shall say in his Heart, my

Dan. 12. 3.

Lord delays his coming, and shall begin to smite his Fellow-Servant, and Eat and Drink with the Drunken, Vers. 48, 49.

Doctrine. Note from hence, *That in the latter Days there will be Evil or Ungodly Persons, who will assume the Ministry, and hardly believe that Christ will come again, and from thence be led away to Live Unholy Lives.*

It may be feared, some of this sort may get into true Churches; but by smiting their Fellow-servant, some think our Lord refers to Persecution; and so to another sort of Men that call themselves his Ministers, who turn Persecutors of his Faithful Servants, or at least Vilify, Reproach, or render them very Odious to all they can, which horrid Wickedness Christ will severely punish in the great Day.

The Lord of that Servant shall come when he looketh not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of, --- And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, Vers. 50, 51.

Note, That some who are Preachers and Ungodly Men, shall perish eternally; and that such who either Reproach or Persecute Christ's Faithful Ministers, shall be cast into Hell.

My Brethren, It ought to be well observed, how many Parables our Saviour ends after this amazing Nature, viz. of casting Sinners into Hell, to suffer God's Wrath and Vengeance for Ever.

Wicked Preachers shall Perish with Vengeance.

U S E.

1. You may gather from what hath been said, who are true and faithful Ministers of Christ.

2. And also that the Gospel Church is Congregational, and not National; for what National Constitution has a Steward over it, as a chief Ruler? No, a Steward refers to a particular Household.

3. Moreover we Infer, that as a Minister hath received a great Trust, and is a great Blessing to a particular Congregation, so he being a Ruler, is indued with Authority, and ought to be had in Esteem and Honour.

4. And that he, and all Christ's Household Servants, ought to Watch, and be ready for Christ's coming.

5. That Wicked Preachers of all People (especially such who smite Christ's Servants) are in a fearful State and Condition.

6. Let every one that belongs to this Household, labour to behave themselves well therein, for the Eyes of God are always upon this Household; *That thou may'st know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, &c.* Many have not Learned to carry it as they ought, in the House of God, with that Zeal, Holiness, and Observation of the Laws, Rules, and Precepts thereof, under the care and charge of the Steward, and good Discipline of it.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

7. We Infer, that 'tis no small Honour to dwell in this House, and be one of this Household, and much greater Honour and Dignity to be an approved and Faithful Steward of the Household of Christ.

8. It may reprove such who belong to this or that particular Church or Household of Christ Jesus, who are so left to themselves, as to violate the sacred Covenant they come under to dwell in, and there to Worship God, and always be fed, and under the Eye of the Steward and whole Household; such deserve no place therein, but as disorderly Persons, ought to be proceeded against, and turned out of the Family.

9. Union, Love, and sweet Concord, is to be pressed after, and indeavoured to be promoted, by every one that dwells in this Family, or are of this Household, nothing tending more to the Glory of a Family, than their waking together in Unity; Discord, Contentions, and Divisions in any Family being hateful, and to be abhorred; and such that cause Divisions in this Household, ought to be marked, and proceeded against, as Directions in that case are given.

T H E

The Parable of the wise and foolish Virgins.

SERMON XVII.

M A T T H XXV. 1, to 12.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom, &c.

*Tear of
Christ's
Life 33.*

THIS is one of those Prophetical Parables our Lord spake; also this and the Parable of the Mustard Seed discovers the State of the Church in the latter days, or just at the time of Christ's coming.

The coherence of this Parable, and to what time it doth refer.

Parables I have formerly shewed you, my Brethren, are taken from earthly things, or Actions of men, to illustrate some choice heavenly Doctrine, or Spiritual mysteries; and the first and chief thing that is to be considered, is the Scope and main End thereof.

And evident it is, that our Saviour in this refers to what precedeth in the foregoing Chapter, where he answered a question put forth by his Disciples: *Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the World?* This question is three-fold.

1. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.
2. The sign of Christ's coming.
3. And of the end of the World.

The end of the World no man knows, *no, nor the Angels of Heaven, nor the Son himself, but the Father only.* And hence he exhorts all to Watchfulness and Prayer: *Watch ye therefore, for you know neither the day nor hour.* That is, neither the day nor hour when our Lord will come, nor the end of the World.

Mat. 24. 42.

Verf. 13.

Now this coming of Christ is either personal or precursory.

Rev. 21. 3.

(1.) His second personal coming I judge will be at the beginning of the thousand years reign, when God will tabernacle with men.

(2.) There is a Precursory coming of our Lord, (as one notes) or a most glorious Spiritual coming, to set up a more visible and universal Kingdom in this World, which will precede his personal Appearance; which I take to be the beginning of the latter day Glory, and which will be at the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, for then Jesus Christ will

begin his Spiritual and more visible and glorious Kingdom, or when the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. One design of this coming of our blessed Lord, is to destroy the Son of Perdition, and utterly to overthrow Mystery Babylon: And then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his Mouth, and shall destroy with the Brightness of his coming. Now it is partly this coming of Christ (I conclude) our Lord in the first place intends, tho' I will not exclude his personal Appearance; for I see no reason to doubt, but that the precursory coming of the Lord Jesus is to prepare things for his personal Appearance, when (as a Bridegroom) he will appear to celebrate the Marriage with his beloved Spouse. Yet his coming upon Mystery Babylon, or by his bright Appearance to destroy the Son of Perdition, may be distinguished from the coming last mentioned, tho both may be comprehended, or included by the Bridegrooms coming. And now at this time, viz. when Christ will come upon Babylon, and begin to set up his more visible Kingdom and Rule in and among his People, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared or likened unto ten Virgins:

*Tear of
Christ's
mystery 4-
Rev. 11.
15. 18.*

2 Thess. 2.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven, &c.

Even at the ending of the fourth Monarchy, or at the time of the utter downfall of the Romish Power, when the Stone shall smite the Image upon the Feet and Toes, Dan. 2. 34. compared with ver. 44. *And in the days of those Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, &c.* not in the days when the Iron Legs of the Roman Monarch had the power, or when Christ began his Spiritual or Gospel Church State, which was when Tyberius the Emperor reigned at Rome, tho some suppose this is meant by these Words, *in the days of those Kings*; but I conceive that the holy Ghost refers to

A little before the coming of Christ the Church is compared to ten Virgins, five Wise and five foolish.

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the Government of the Romish Monarch, when it came to the *ten Toes*, being partly weak, and partly strong, signified by the *Iron and Clay*, which will not, cannot mix together; the *ten Toes* of the Image, and *ten Horns* of the Beast, *Rev. 17.* I conclude refer to the same *ten Kings*: *And in the days of those Kings* (which no doubt is now this present state and time of the *Roman Monarchy*) *shall the God of Heaven set up a most glorious and more visible Kingdom than ever yet he had in the World, since the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead; for evident it is, that this Kingdoms State must commence from the declining State of the Papal power, and after the passing away of the second wo, and upon the founding of the seventh Angel, Rev. 11. Dan. 7. 26, 27. The second wo is past, and behold the third wo cometh quickly. And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great Voices in Heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: That is, it does begin to be his Kingdom. I am persuaded that all the seven Vials appertain to the seventh Trumpet, and that not one of those Vials, or seven last Plagues are as yet poured forth, nor shall till the Mahumetan Power is gone, or ceases to be any further Wo to the Antichristian State, which certainly is near, even at the very Door. So that 'tis evident, the chief design of our blessed Lord in this Parable is*

Rev. 11.
14.
Ver. 15.

The Scope
of the Pa-
rable.

1. To discover what a multitude of formal and foolish Professors there would be in the Church at the time of this his coming.

2. To stir up all Christians to holy Watchfulness, least they meet with a dismal Disappointment when he comes.

I shall in the next place consider the parts of the Parable here following.

1. Shew you what is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. What is meant by the wise and foolish Virgins.

3. Why called Virgins.

4. Who is meant by the Bridegroom.

5. What by going forth to meet him.

6. What is meant by Lamps; the Virgins took, and what by taking their Lamps, and going forth.

7. What by the Oyl and Vessels.

8. What by the Bridegrooms tarrying.

9. What by the midnight Cry.

10. What by the Virgins rising and trimming their Lamps.

11. What by going to buy Oyl.

12. What by being ready, and going in to the Wedding Chamber.

13. What by shutting the Door.

And under the several Heads I shall note some Points of Doctrine.

To proceed:

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened, &c. ver. 1.

The Kingdom of Heaven is taken variously, (as I have shewed;) but here no doubt by it is meant the visible Church, as all Expositors agree, so that we may read it thus, viz. Then shall the visible Church be likened to ten Virgins, &c. That is, at the latter end of the World, or a little before our Lord cometh.

And from hence note,

1 Doct. The visible Church in the times of the Gospel, especially, may be compared to the Kingdom of Heaven.

In speaking to this

1. I shall shew you in what respect the visible Church may be compared to a Kingdom.

2. Shew why it is compared to the Kingdom of Heaven.

First, Because the Church is under a Kingly Government, or is governed by a King, viz. our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church owns no other King or Head, Lord and Lawgiver in Divine or Spiritual things, but Christ alone: The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, &c. Again it is said, Thine eyes shall see the King in his Beauty: This King is the glorious Bridegroom of our Souls, the Government of the Church is Monarchical, and governed by a King, clothed with absolute Power and Authority, whose Will is his Law; and yet his Government is just and righteous, because he cannot will any thing, but what is good: There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. We own no King to have Command over our Consciences, but Christ alone.

2. Because the visible Church is a distinct state from any other Kingdom and sort of Government. Moses who governed the common-wealth of Israel, hath no Command over Christs Spiritual Kingdom, nor any other Person as a Vice-Roy, the Pope nor any earthly Potentate have any thing to do to lord it over Christs Subjects: What Power hath the French King to lord it over the Freeborn People of England? (we have a King of our own?) Much less what has he to do to lord

lord it, and Tyrannize over Christs Saints, who are freeborn Subjects of the King of Heaven and Earth.

3. Because every Kingdom consisteth of divers Sorts, Degrees and Ranks of men, of different Frames of Spirit, and Dispositions; some Noble, and some Ignoble, some Rich, and some Poor, some Old, and some Young, some Vertuous, and some Wicked, some wise, and others Foolish: So it is in the more refined Kingdom of Jesus Christ, there may be some Noble, some Mighty, (tho' not many of that sort) *In a great House are not only Vessels of Gold and Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth, some to Honour, and some to dishonour.* In Christs Kingdom are Fathers, Young men, and little Children, and some sincere Christians, and some Hypocrites, or wise and foolish ones.

2 Tim. 2.
20.

4. Because the same Laws bind all sorts of Persons, within the Compass of that Kingdom, or its Jurisdiction, there is not one Law for the great ones, (or for the rich) and another for the meaner sort, and as it is thus in an earthly Kingdom, it is in Christs visible Church, all are under the same Laws, Precepts and Ordinances.

5. Moreover as Ignorance of the Laws of a Kingdom or State exempts no man from Obedience, or Punishment for Disobedience, because they are published, and may be known; it is not enough for any to say they did not know this or that Law, Statute or Ordinance: So Ignorance of Christs holy Ordinance and Precepts in a People that live where the Gospel is preached, and his Ordinances published, will exempt no man from Obedience thereunto.

The Word
of God the
great Sta-
tute Book
of the
Church.

6. *In every Kingdom there is a Statute Book,* (if it be a regular Constitution) wherein all the fundamental Laws, Statutes and Ordinances of that Kingdom are written: So the Word of God or blessed Gospel is the great Statute Book of the Church or of Christs Spiritual Kingdom, in which all his Laws and Ordinances are recorded.

2 Pet. 4. 8,
9. 10.

7. *A King appoints Officers in his Kingdom* under him, to govern and order and manage all the Affairs thereof, and to do all things by his Authority and in his Name: Even so hath Jesus Christ set Officers in his Church to order and govern his Spiritual Kingdom under him, by his Authority and in his Name, and according to his blessed Word, and they that submit not to his Government, despise the Kings Authority; the Officers are *Elders and Deacons*, whose work is expressly laid down in the Gospel: nor do we read of any other Office or Officers he hath left in his Church (and to abide) but only those two.

8. *And as in a Kingdom those who violate*

the Laws thereof, or such who own not the Laws thereof, are called to account and punished: So are or ought all such in Christs Spiritual Kingdom, who submit not to the Government of it, to be called to Account, and without Repentance to be cast out as such that will not have Christ rule over them.

Secondly, *Why is the Church called the Kingdom of Heaven?*

1. Because the Church in its Constitution, Laws and Government is not of this World, but of a sublime and heavenly Constitution, the Legal Ministration being carnal is called a *Worldly Sanctuary*. In-^{Heb. 9. 1.} deed the Church State of the Jews, (tho of divine Appointment) yet might rather be called *Worldly* than Heavenly, because ^{The Gospel Church more spiri- tual than the Legal was.} it was national, and much agreeing with Reason and the Nature of man; it being a Law requiring Obedience with the Promise of Life, and threatening death for Disobedience, (those moral Precepts being the same in Substance, with those which are written in the Hearts of all men;) but the Constitution of the Gospel Church is founded upon Grace, not on Nature, tho some who pretend kindness to her, confound Nature and Grace together in Christs Spiritual Kingdom, being ignorant of the Nature, quality and Righteousness of this Kingdom.

2. All the Laws (I mean all pure Gospel Precepts) in a special manner are from Heaven, (as our Lord asked the Jews, concerning the Baptism of John, *whether from Heaven, or of men?*) The blessed Jesus positively saith he received his Doctrine from his Father, and as the ^{Joh. 12.} Father gave him Commandment; and hence ^{50.} he is said also to *speake from Heaven.* ^{Heb 12. 23.}

3. The Church may be called the Kingdom of Heaven, because the same King that reigns in Heaven, reigns in this, and governs it; he is also always present with his People in his Kingdom below: moreover the Saints are ruled, and do subject to him, so that tho Christ is King over all the Earth, yet they are Believers only, who are the Subjects of his Special Spiritual Kingdom, he has Power over all, but his Church is only the Kingdom of Grace, where Christ by his Spirit and Influences thereof, and according to his own Laws, Rules and Reigns.

4. Because the Doctrine, Faith, Order, Rule, and Government lead to Heaven, promoting an holy and heavenly Life, and to prepare us for Heaven.

5. Because the Saints are the Subjects of Heaven, Heirs of Heaven, and their Names are written in Heaven; moreover *their Conversation is said to be in Heaven:* they live heavenly Lives, and are influ-^{Phil. 3. 20.} enced

Col. 3. 1. enced by heavenly Principles, and chiefly
2, 3. mind things above.

6. Because the Church is a Figure of Heaven, or it resembles Heaven, and ought to imitate Heaven in Unity, Love, Holiness, and also in singing Gods Praises, with united Hearts and Voices, as the Saints and Angels do, and shall for ever in Heaven. — And hence likewise Ministers in the Church are called *Stars*, they are as *Stars* to give Light, and adorn these Heavens: And if any of these Stars fall, they are said to fall from Heaven.

Mr. Shep. 7. Because here is the Glory of Heaven
herd on begun, and look (faith one) as the
the Virgins same Sun which fills the Stars with Glory,
p. 5. yet the same beams touch the Earth:
Even so the same Glory which shines in
Heaven, shines in the Church here; hence
1 Pet. 5. 10. we are said to be called into his eternal Glo-
Eph. 1. 3. ry, and also are set down in heavenly places
in Christ.

U S E.

Infer. 1. 1. We may infer from hence, that it is no small Priviledge to be admitted Members of the visible Church; what called out of the World, and not to be of this World, what a blessing is this!

2d. 2. Moreover it shews what Honour God hath put upon his Church below, in calling it the Kingdom of Heaven.

Rep. 3. 3. This therefore may reprehend such who strive to confound the Church and the World together. Sirs, you know not what you do, you may as well endeavour to bring Heaven and Earth together. The Church is a select separated People, and as distinct from the World, as Heaven is from the Earth, and hath in it different Laws to govern it; and so are the Subjects, Men and Women, that are born from above, being of heavenly Spirits, Tempers and Dispositions.

1. Exhort. 4. Take heed you do not defile these Heavens; they that pollute the Church, pollute or defile Heaven. O let us live as men in Heaven: also know that the Angels of Heaven attend our Assemblies, and observe how we walk and behave ourselves, but which is much more, our heavenly King hath his Throne here, he sits amongst us, and beholds our Lives, Spirits and Conversations.

2. Exhort. 5. Let sinners take heed of reproaching the Church of God, for such blaspheme
Rev. 13. 6. God, his Tabernacle, and those that dwell in Heaven, as you read some are said to do. Moreover let all seek the Good, the Peace and Glory of this Kingdom, and promote the spiritual Trade, Riches, and the Inlargement of it.

Terror. 6. Terror; Wo to them that would pull down this Kingdom, or spoil the

Beauty and Glory thereof, or cut off the Provision of it, or seek to raze it.

7. Likewise this may inform such how Inform. vain and fruitless all their Labour and Attempts will be; can they shake Heaven? Heb. 12. this Kingdom (as to its State and Constitution) cannot be shaken nor undermined, also God will undo all that Afflict her in the latter day.

8. Pray for the latter days Glory of this Kingdom, it shall be great, and Kings of the Earth shall bring their Glory unto it.

Caution: Take heed you raise not Tumults, nor cause Divisions in this spiritual and heavenly Kingdom; they that seek her Good, and love her, shall prosper; but such who shew a bitter spirit against her, or disturb her quiet, God will destroy for ever, unless they repent. Take heed you do not stain her Glory, nor do that which may weaken this Kingdom, and grieve this King. Pf. 122. 6.

Shall be likened to ten Virgins.

Of these this Kingdom doth consist, namely of *Virgins*, and these Virgins are the Members of the visible Church.

Quest. Why are they called *Virgins*?

Ans. Negatively, Virgins do not refer to the female Sex only, but to Males also: These are they that have not defiled themselves with Women, for they are *Virgins*. Rev. 14. 4.

1. Virgins are chaste and not defiled: So the Members of the true visible Church are not defiled with Idolatry, not Popish, nor any other Superstitions, they hate spiritual Fornication. Idolatry is often in the Scripture called Whoredom, Adultery and Fornication. Sirs, many Churches consist not of Virgins, but of such who are defiled with the Fornications of the great Whore: Hence in Israel such who kept themselves pure from Idolatry, were called the *Virgin Daughter of Sion*.

2. Virgins are commonly the younger sort, and are of yielding or complying Temper, will bow and be intreated by a Lover they like and approve of: So these like young Plants bow and bend to the Word and Intreatings of Christ. Old Trees can't be bowed; so many old sinners can't be perswaded to bow to Christ, they will not yield to espouse him.

3. Virgins (perhaps) are often courted and tempted to Uncleaness, or to Unchastity, but they yield not: So Satan tempts the Saints, and wicked men tempt and intice them to sin, and to Idolatry, but they that are wise yield not, they abhor all such Motions of the Devil and his Instruments.

4. Virgins are often espoused; so Believers are espoused to Jesus Christ: 12 Cor. 11. have espoused you to one Husband, that 12 may

2 Cor. 11. *may present you a chaste Virgin to Christ;*
2. they forsake all other Lovers, and cleave to the Lord Jesus in all sincere and cordial Affections, they die to the inordinate Love of this World, and the Law, *being become dead to that, that they may be married to Jesus Christ.*

Rom 7. 4. *See the Marriage Supper opened.*
5. Virgins delight to be clean and neatly dress'd, (unless they be foolish and slothful ones) who are often ashamed of their foul Linnen; but others will have their Linnen white and without spot: So wise Virgins, or sincere Christians love to be clothed in Linnen clean and white, *which is the Righteousness of Christ*, called the Righteousness of the Saints, because it is that which was wrought for, and is put upon them that are Virgins, or true Believers; and also they love to be clothed with the Garment of inward Holiness or Sanctification, *and hate the Garment spotted by the flesh.*

6. Virgins love also to be richly adorned: So true Believers love to be adorned with all the Graces of the Spirit; particularly with a *meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

1 Pet. 3. 4. 7. A Virgin espoused (if wise) hath cordial affection or dear love to her Bridegroom (or him that hath espoused her) so sincere Believers most dearly love Jesus Christ the Bridegroom of their Souls; but foolish ones, tho they have espoused Jesus Christ by a visible Profession, love other things more than him.

8. Virgins love and take delight in the Company of each other; so true Christians delight to converse with each other: Psal. 319. *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy Word:* And again he saith, *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee.*

9. Virgins are commonly beautiful, or comely: So all wise and sincere Believers are beautiful and comely in Christs sight, being richly adorned, and having the Image of God upon them; and hence they like beautiful Virgins are exposed by Satan to manifold Temptations, to corrupt themselves (by false Worship and other inticements also,) *I am black but comely:* Black by Reproaches and Persecution, and by their own inward Corruptions, but in Christ very beautiful and comely, having *Doves eyes*, a most chaste and single Eye; set upon Christ, and delighting in Christ alone.

10. Sincere Believers may be compared to chaste Virgins, because they hate the hire of an Harlot; *They give gifts to all Whores.* But tho the Devil offers all the world to intice true Christians to forsake Jesus Christ, and cleave to Idolatry, they abhorre the hire: What have some Virgins suffered before they would submit to unchaste Embraces? and pray

what have some Christians endured before they would cleave to the Idolatry of the Heathen; or to the Idolatries and Superstitions of the Church of Rome? Even to the most cruel Deaths that bloody Tyrants could invent; so that neither the pleasure nor profit of sin, could or can intice the true Children of God to defile themselves: and tho it is true, God hath sometimes suffered some of them to fall in an hour of temptation, as *David, Peter, &c.* yet like chaste Virgins they commonly (unless fearfully insnared) withstand all temptations of Sin and Satan, as *Joseph* did.

11. A Virgin if beset or way-laid, she will cry out, (and indeed so she must, or else not be guiltless, but it will be deemed a consenting:) So a poor Believer when beset by Sin or Satan, doth and must cry out to God, as *Paul* did, and will not yield or consent, so much as to evil thoughts, and so are guiltless; for there is no defilement or charge of sin without the Party's consent, or the yielding of the will: *The evil I would not do, that do I.* — Evil thoughts may not be charged as sin, that are only Satans suggestions, if they are abhorred, and the Soul cries out: *For this I besought the Lord thrice, &c.*

12. Virgins are careful to avoid all debauched and scandalous Company: 'Tis the counsel of Wisdom, *not to come near the Harlots house*; so Believers should take heed to avoid the company of the wicked. *Who can touch Pitch and not be defiled?* Who can worship in a false way once, and not be defiled thereby? or keep company with Swearers, Drunkards or prophane Persons, and not get himself a blot? *Dinah* was defiled by wandering abroad, or getting amongst the uncircumcised: *Abstain from all appearance of evil: — with the froward we soon learn frowardness.*

13. A Virgin will not put on an Harlots Dress; we read of the Attire of an harlot, this an honest Woman abhorreth: So Christians will avoid all superstitious Rites, Traditions, and Ceremonies of the false Church, they reject all Popish Relicks and Superstitions, which seem to be as the Attire of an Harlot.

14. It is the Character of a chaste Virgin, that she be seen and not heard: A comely silence is an excellent Vertue in Damosels; *An Harlots voice is loud, &c.* As some persons, my Brethren, hang all their Riches on their Backs, so some Professors Religion is all in their Tongues and airy Notions. An empty Vessel (if you strike it) sounds more than that which is full: So an empty Professor commonly makes a greater noise than a pious Christian; empty Professors boast many times of their Assurance, when a true Believer is full of Complaints and Doubtings.

Pro. 10. 19 ings. In the multitude of words there wants not sin; but a Fool by his silence is counted wise. Sirs, frothy and light Discourse, discovers a vain and frothy Heart; hence David resolved to keep his Tongue as with a Bridle, while the wicked were

Pro. 17. 27 with him. A wise man spares his words.

15. Virgins are apt on every turn to blush, they are shame-fac'd, but a whores face is impudent. God complains of some that sinned and were not ashamed, neither did they blush. A true Believer at every occasion is ready to fear he hath spoken or done amiss, and the blood is as it were ready to come into his face, he is ready to blush and to be ashamed before the Lord, his Conscience is tender, and presently checks or smites him.

16. Virgins desire to have manifestations of the love of them who have espoused them; so doth every Believer: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. The Son of God might be said to kiss his Elect, his Spouse, (1) When he took our Nature into Union with his divine person. And (2) When he discovers to us, that he loved us from everlasting, by Effectual Calling. (3) When he applies his Robe of Righteousness to us in free Justification. (4.) Also when he stamps his own Image upon us in Regeneration, and Sanctification. (5) When he seals his Love to the Soul by his Promises, or in an Ordinance. For he gives us Evidences and Manifestations of his Love in all these respects.

We are also bid to Kiss the Son.

Who may be said to kiss the Son. 1. This we may be said to do when we own and worship him; we read of some that had not Kissed Baal, that is, they had not owned him to be a God: such refuse to Kiss the Son, who own him not to be God Over all, or that deny his Deity. (2.) We kiss the Son when we worship him; there is a Kiss of Adoration: They say to them, Let the men that sacrifice Kiss the Calves; that is, let them give Adoration to them; they that honour the Son as they honour the Father, may be said to kiss the Son. Kisses are a Demonstration of Honour and Reverence; as when a man kisses the Kings hand, the King honours him. Thus Christ confers love and honour on those persons who are admitted to kiss him. (3) When we believe in Christ, or touch him by Faith, we may be said to Kiss the Son, we embrace, cleave to him as our Saviour, and the Bridegroom of our Souls. (4.) When we love the Lord Jesus with a superlative Love, the highest Love, we may be said to kiss the Son; and thus all the wise Virgins shew their Love to Christ, and own him as their Saviour, and chief beloved of their Souls. (5) Moreover, there is a Kiss of Reconciliation, the Fa-

ther kissed his returning Prodigal, to denote he was reconciled to him: When we are reconciled to God and to his ways and People, and are united to Christ, we may be said to kiss the Son. See the Parable of the Prodigal opened 2 Book.

16. Virgins are commonly strong in their Affections; the Lamentation of a Virgin is put for the depth of sorrow. O what Love has a true Believer to Christ! (David's Soul was broken with longings after God,) and as their Joy is unspeakable when they have his presence, so their sorrow is excessive when he is absent.

17. A Virgin is the Object of a Princes affection; so are Believers the Object of Christs affection and delight. Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, &c. How fair is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse, how much better is thy love than Wine! Cant. 4. 9. Ver. 10.

Lastly, Virgins used to go forth in the Night (in those Eastern Countreys) to meet the Bridegroom, and attend on him into the Marriage Chamber: So Believers in the latter days (this propheticall Parable shews) should in a dark time go forth with great expectation to meet Jesus Christ the Bridegroom of their Souls, as you will hear more hereafter. The Custom of the Eastern Countreys about meeting the Bridegroom.

And went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

1. I shall shew who this Bridegroom is, and why so called.

2. What may be meant by the Virgins going forth to meet him.

1. This Bridegroom all understand is our Lord Jesus. And tho I have in opening the Parable of the Marriage-Feast, set forth the Excellency of his Person, (and also in opening the Parable of the Pearl of great price,) yet I shall here shew why he is called a Bridegroom.

Doct. Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of all Believers.

I shall shew,

1. How fitly he may be called a Bridegroom.

2. Shew that he excels all Bridegrooms.

I. A Bridegroom all know is one that purposeth to marry, and not to live a single Life, how happy soever he might be did he resolve never to change his Condition. My Brethren, the Son of God, notwithstanding all that glory he had with the Father from Eternity, he being his only begotten Son, lying in his Bosom, and was the joy and delight of his Fathers heart, and being cloathed with all the personal Excellencies of the eternal Father, yet resolved to dispose of himself in Marriage: And by calling himself a Bridegroom he declared to men, and

Why Christ is compared to a Bridegroom. See the Parable of the Marriage Supper opened 3 Book.

and Angels, that he hath a Spouse (who as his Bride) he resolved should live with him in glory for ever and ever.

II. And in Obedience, as a wife Son he consulted with his Father about this important affair, and would not proceed one step without his Fathers hearty agreement and consent. Hence it is said, *the*

Zech. 6. 13. Counsel of Peace was between them both: As it was a Counsel of Peace, it signifies the persons beloved were fallen under Gods displeasure; and tho multitudes of the Angels were so fallen as well as Mankind, yet he passed by the first, and fixt his Heart and thoughts on a remnant of the lost Offspring of fallen Mankind, who were chosen and given to him by the Father from everlasting: Now this Marriage being determined by the whole Trinity, and who the Spouse should be that the second Person should marry; when the fulness of time was come, the Father sent him into the World on this glorious and gracious design; hence he said,

Joh. 8. 42. I proceeded and came from God; neither came I of my self, but he sent me.

III. A man that designs to marry, maketh choice of the person he purposeth to espouse. So Jesus Christ with all cordial affections made choice of Gods Elect seed amongst the fallen lump of Mankind, whom he designed to redeem and betroth to himself for ever: *For verily he took*

Heb. 2. 16. not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

IV. When a man hath fixed upon the Object he designs to marry, he contrives the proper way and method, in order to the accomplishment of his design and purpose; so the Son of God consulted with the Father, what was best and fittest to be done, that he might bring to pass and actually accomplish this his glorious design, the result of which was,

1. That the Son of God enters first into a holy Compact or Covenant with the Father, and so became a covenanting Party or common Head, Representative and Surety for all Gods Elect, who were his intended Spouse.

2. That he must marry (or take into Union with his divine Person the Nature of his Elect, or) fallen Mankind, and so be incarnate, in the flesh, in the womb of a Virgin; for if he was not *flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone*, he could not be a proper Mediator between God and Man, nor be our Surety; neither could he be a fit and proper Bridegroom to espouse and marry us; but, *forasmuch as the Children*

Heb. 2. 14. are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same.

3. That in taking on him our Nature he became our Kinsman, and so had

the right of redemption fell upon him, and thereby also was obliged to espouse us unto himself, (or all that were given to him by the Father.) And,

4. That in that Nature he must work out a perfect and compleat Righteousness, which the sacred Law of God required: And because the intended Spouse was fallen under Gods high displeasure for Treason and Rebellion, (in violating the said sacred Law of Heaven) and was also condemned to die, (and none but he alone could satisfy for her horrid Crimes) he foresaw it was absolutely necessary that concerning the Flesh he must be put to death for her, or in her stead and room, to all which he heartily agreed, and obliged himself to the Father in the said Covenant to do, and readily took that long journey from Heaven to Earth, to be clothed with our Nature, and in Garments dipt in Blood, so became a Suitor, to woe and intreat the Sinners Love and Affections.

Stop here, and wonder O my Soul! O what a Journey did the Son of God take upon him! and what glory did he leave, and into what a dolorous Land of darkness and horror did he come! and what great abasement, ignominy, shame and spitting upon, expose himself unto! and what a cursed Death did he die, that he might become the Bridegroom of our Souls!

V. A man that hath fixed his Love on a person (he hath thoughts to espouse) propounds questions to her, among which this is one, *i. e.* whether she be not pre-engaged? and if she be (thro folly in a wicked way to her utter undoing) he strives to break off such a sinful and unlawful contract. Now the Son of God well knew that Sinners whom he designed to espouse, were intangled in love in a wicked way, and to their utter ruine, with many Lovers, *viz.* with this sensual World and their own horrid Lusts, and that many of them also were fallen in love with their own Righteousness; which unjust Contract he strives to break, and disintangle each Soul from all those Soul-undoing Lovers: And this he intimated

Sinners were pre-engaged to many cursed Lovers when Christ comes to woo them.

when he said, *Unless a man deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple*— Nay moreover, that

such that espouse him, must hate all things for his sake: *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

That is, Christ must have the preference, or have the Sinners chiefest Love, and affections of his Heart; the lesser Love in Scripture is called a hatred: *Leah* was said to be hated, because *Jacob* loved *Rachel* above her.

Mat. 16. 24.

Luk. 14. 26.

Gen. 29. 31.

VI. A man that designs to become a Bridegroom, discovers his Intentions to the person, and makes offers of his Love to her: So the Son of God discovers to sinners his great Love, and also makes most gracious offers of his endeared Love unto them.

Christ discovered very early his love to sinners that were given to him.
 * Jer. 31. 3. 1. He discovers the Earliness of it to them; the Father gave him: *Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting Love**. 2. By his entering into that Covenant (I mentioned) with the Father for them. 3. By taking our Nature into union with his divine Person. 4. By his undergoing all those hard things for our sakes, as reproaches, spitting on, plucking off the hair, and by being made a Curse for us, and in dying the ignominious death of the Cross. 5. By coming to the Sinners door, standing long, and knocking there. 6. By sending his Servants (his Ministers) as his Spokesmen, to entreat, and beseech them to grant him their love and affections. 7. By his own importunate Invitations, saying, *Behold me, behold me, — O come to the waters, &c. — Come to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden.* And multitudes of the like gracious Invitations. 8. By the many Promises he hath made to them that receive and embrace him in the Arms of their Faith.

VII. A faithful Lover respecteth the Person of his intended Bride, more than her Wealth, Beauty, or anything whatsoever. Brethren, Jesus Christ sees nothing in Sinners to move his affections; for they have neither beauty, wealth, honour, nor good conditions, being in themselves filthy, deformed, lying polluted in their blood, and enemies to him.

What arguments Christ useth to obtain sinners love and affections.
 Rev. 22. 16. VIII. A Lover uses all due Means and the strongest arguments he can, to engage the affections of the person he loves: So Jesus Christ uses most strong and powerful Arguments to obtain the Sinners love and affections: And 1. What can be a greater, than the worth, dignity and glory of his Person? *I and my Father are one.* Rev. 22. 16 *I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star. — The brightness of the Fathers glory, and the express Image of his Person.* 2. He mentioneth also the greatness, strength and sincerity of his Love. 3. His wonderful Riches, being the Heir of all things. 4. His shedding of his Blood. 5. The greatness of his Beauty. 6. His admirable Wisdom. 7. The greatness of his Power. 8. The sweetness, meekness, and humbleness of his Spirit. 9. Also the necessity Sinners have of him. 10. And the great Benefits all that receive him shall partake of by him. — *He that hath the Son hath life.* 11. He sheds his Love abroad in their Hearts, by the

Holy Ghost. Yea, 12. He circumcises their Hearts to love him.

IX. A Lover, when he hath obtained the full consent of the Person beloved, espouseth and marries her: So Jesus Christ having obtained the full consent of Sinners, espouseth, betroths and marries them to himself: *For I am married to you,* saith the Lord, — The Lord is thine Husband.

X. The Bridegroom hath the Bride, she is his only. *I am my beloveds, and he is mine. — He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom.* Believers are his many ways. (1) By vertue of Election, or by his and his Fathers Choice. (2.) *His* by the solemn Covenant between the Father and himself, by which Covenant they were given to him: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me.* (3.) And his we are also by the right of Redemption, he bought and purchased them. (4.) *His* by vertue of Conquest; he hath overcome them, and all their Enemies who had power over them, and kept them in bondage and slavery. (5.) *His* by the holy Relinquation of themselves to him. They renounce all other Lovers, and cleave to Jesus Christ.

XI. The Bridegroom (if a Prince or a noble person) settles a rich Dowry upon his Bride: So Jesus Christ settles upon every Believer a vast Dowry, or bestows on them, a vast Inheritance; for he makes them joynt heirs with himself, and makes over a Crown and Kingdom to them.

XII. A Bridegroom rejoiceth over his Bride; so doth the Lord Jesus Christ: *As a young man marryeth a Virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*

XIII. A Bridegroom marrying his Bride (if she was in debt, and in danger of an Arrest) she is thereby discharged from all fear and danger, for her Husband is countable for all she owed: So by the Lord Jesus marrying poor Sinners, (they being before far in debt, owing ten thousand Talents) they are thereby freed, and discharged of all danger and fear of being arrested by divine Justice, and sent to the eternal Prison of Hell and divine Wrath.

XIV. The person that a Prince espouseth and marries, (tho she was never so mean and ignoble before, is thereby raised to great Honour, having his Name put upon her, and is become a Queen, and hath also his own Retinue, or a noble Guard, to wait upon her: So all Believers Christ marries

marries, (who were mean, ignoble, and base-born) are thereby raised to great honour, and are called by Christs Name, and have the holy Angels to be their Retinue, to guard and wait upon them; *they minister to them that shall be heirs of Salvation.*

Heb. 1. 14. XV. A Bridegroom sympathizeth with his Bride in all her Afflictions, if he be a wife, sincere, and faithful Person. So doth the Lord Jesus, in all their Afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them, in his Love and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Isa. 63. 9. XVI. A Bridegroom makes great Preparations for the Marriage Day, and on that day both are very gloriously adorned. *My Brethren, tho Believers are espoused and secretly married to Jesus Christ, yet there is a day appointed for the publick Solemnization of their Marriage, when the Bride will have made her self ready, and in that day the King will appear in his Glory, and shine brighter than the Sun in his strength in all his amazing Grandure, and at his right Hand shall stand the Queen in Gold of Ophir—and hence it is said, When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in Glory.* And indeed (as I conceive) this is partly the day, to which this Parable refers; for tho the Bridegrooms coming may refer to his more glorious Appearance in the last days; yet (as was hinted) it may likewise refer to his personal coming.

Col. 3. 3, 4. 17. The Bridegroom at the Marriage Day hath many Virgins to attend him, or wait upon him; it was so amongst the Jews: So many Virgins shall go forth with their Lamps to meet Jesus Christ and wait upon him at his glorious Appearance; but more of that hereafter.

Secondly, *Jesus Christ excells all other Bridegrooms in many respects.*

1. What Noble and Highborn Prince ever set his Heart upon such a mean, low, base and ignoble person, as Jesus Christ did? he loved a Leper, set his Heart upon such that were very poor, naked and loathsome Creatures, even such that were condemned and cursed by the Law, and full of sores and filthy ulcers also.

2. Jesus Christ became poor to make his Bride rich: *For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be made rich.*

3. Christ the spiritual Bridegroom laid down his Life, or shed his own most precious Blood to redeem his intended Bride, in which he excells all Bridegrooms that ever were: some have died for love, (it

is true) because they could not obtain the object Beloved; but Jesus Christ dyed to obtain our Love, he could never enjoy his Spouse, unless he dyed in her stead.

4. This Bridegroom confers Beauty on his Bride, he makes her comely, who naturally was filthy and very deformed, which no other Bridegroom ever did, nor can do: *And thou wast exceeding beautiful.*

— *And thy renown went forth among the Heathen for thy Beauty, for it was perfect thro' my comeliness which I put upon thee, saith the Lord God.* Ezech. 16. 13, 14.

5. Bridegrooms among men do not usually cloath and adorn their Brides, or the Persons they court, at their own proper Charge; but Jesus Christ puts on his Bride the glorious Wedding Robe whom he found naked or covered only with filthy Rags, and also the Garment he puts upon her is of wrought Gold, *she shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle-work, &c.* Ps. 45. 13.

6. Many other Bridegrooms cool in a short time in their Love and Affections; but Jesus Christ never decays or cools in his Love to his beloved Bride, but his Love is ever the same, and a Love that passeth Knowledge, the Height, Length, Depth and Breadth thereof is infinite.

7. Other Bridegrooms are sometimes absent from their Brides, and Evils befall them, which they neither know nor are able to prevent: But Jesus Christ is always with Believers, and nothing can befall them without his Knowledge, and that which will not be for their Good he will prevent: *Lo I am with you always to the end of the World.— The Wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of Wrath thou wilt restrain.* Mat. 28. 20. Ps. 74. 10.

8. Other Bridegrooms and Husbands die, and often-times leave their Wives Widdows; But Christ never dies: *I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I live for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell and Death.* Rev. 1. 18.

9. Death breaks that Union that is between earthly Husbands and their Wives, and they live but a short time together, (tho it be sixty Years, it is comparatively but a moment) but Christ and his Spouse shall live together for ever, Death cannot dissolve this Marriage Knot: in all which respects, and many more, it appears that Jesus Christ far excells all other Bridegrooms on Earth, or that ever lived.

APPLICATION.

I. It may be improved by way of Admiration, strange, doth the Creator court the Creature! an abused Prince fall in Love with a rebellious and traiterous Subject!

Wonder at the Condescension of the Son

C c c c c

Son of God! doth he assume our Nature, and become man, that he may be a proper and fit Bridegroom of our Souls, and undergo so many Indignities and Heart-breaking Sorrows, to make us so near unto him, as to be his dear Bride and Spouse, and lye in his Bosom for ever; this will be matter of our Admiration to all Eternity.

Exhort.

2. O sinners will you not fall in love with Jesus Christ? can you refuse such an Offer? if you do, how will you look him in the Face in the great day? he is a coming, his day is near: *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, &c.* and do you make no preparation to meet him?

3. What say you who are the Virgins? I fear you are a sleep, however let all tremble, it seems there are many foolish Virgins in the Church at the time when Christ comes. You may hate Idolatry and all false Worship, and yet be but foolish Virgins. My Brethren, is it not high time to rouse out of sleep, and look out, and prepare, when the Bridegroom is just at the Door; let us all arise, get upon the Watch, and look out.

SERMON XVIII.

Matth. XXV. 1.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, &c.

Lamps signify a visible profession of the Gospel, and the true Worship of God.

YOU have heard the Kingdom of Heaven signifieth here the *visible Church*, and by the Virgins are meant Professors of the true Religion, and Members of the Church, and by the Bridegroom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall now proceed.

And took their Lamps.

1. I shall shew you what these Lamps are.
2. Shew to what custom our Saviour here doth refer.

Commonly by *Lamps* here is understood a visible owning of Christ, or the Profession of Faith, which all the Members of the visible Church should take and hold fast, *viz.* continue in the practice of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, and so maintain the publick Worship of God, and the Profession of this Faith; all these Virgins were found, they all took their Lamps. Yet a Reverend Author saith,

Lamps signify the Readiness of the Churches to meet Jesus Christ. And according to another Author (who hath wrote upon this Parable) *the taking their Lamps is meant the furnishing themselves with what might be of use to lead them in their way at such a time.* Mr. Shepherd on the ten Virgins P. 39. Mr. Scamham.

All (it is true) ought to be ready, but five of them were not ready; yet all took their Lamps, therefore Lamps (I humbly conceive) can't refer to a Readiness to meet Christ, tho none can be ready to meet him, who take not their Lamps, or hold not fast the Profession of their Faith. It is the trimming our Lamps, and having them lighted and burning clearly, and also having Oyl in our Vessels, that renders us to be ready to meet the Bridegroom.

And as to what the other Author saith, I Answer, What can be of greater use to lead us (more visibly and externally) in our way, in order to meet the Lord Jesus Christ, than the holding fast the Form of sound Words, or a constant maintaining and keeping up the publick Worship of God and profession of our Faith.

All the Virgins took their Lamps, *viz.* they had all the Lamp of a visible and external profession, and were deem'd true Worshipers of God. — But

For the further clearing of this, I shall shew you, how fitly a *visible Profession* of the Gospel may be compared to a Lamp.

I. A Lamp is provided to contain Oyl, that it may give light to our selves and others in the Night: So a Christian should have Grace that his Lamp of Profession may give light to himself and to others. *Why a visible or an external profession of a Lamp is compared to a Lamp.*

II. A Lamp may be empty of Oyl, or have but a very little in it: So a Man may have (or make) a profession of Religion, and have no true Grace (or only a little common Grace) in his Heart; for it was only that which made the Lamps of the foolish Virgins to blaze a short time, for had they had the true and proper Oyl, their Lamps had not gone out; because to true Believers more Grace is promised, and all their Needs shall continually be supplied, according to the Riches of Glory that is in Christ, or according to that abundant Grace that is in him. Phil. 4. 19.

III. A Lamp must be supplied with Oyl from another Vessel: So a Believers Lamp of Profession must be supplied with Spiritual Oyl, and that from a two-fold Vessel, (or else their Profession will soon go out, and give no light in this dark World.) (1.) Primarily (and mediately) from Jesus Christ, who is the Fountain Vessel of all Grace. (2.) More immediately (and in a secondary Manner) a Believers

lievers *Lamp* of Profession must be supplied from *within*, I mean *his own Heart*. It is said *ver. 4. The wise took Oyl in their vessels*; that is (as I conceive) they had true Spiritual Oyl, (or true Faith, true Grace) in their own Hearts; and he that hath only a Lamp of Profession, and not Oyl in his vessel, will find his Lamp not burn and give light but a little time: but the wise not only profess, but also possess Jesus Christ in their Souls.

IV. *Lamps may have much Oyl put into them at first*; but that may not be sufficient, they must be recruited, more must be put in; nay, they must be often supplied with more fresh Oyl from some vessel or another. So a true Believer may receive a good measure of Grace, when he was first converted, he received the Grace of Faith, the Grace of Love, Hope, Patience, Humility, &c. But notwithstanding of this, yet he needs more Grace, or an Increase, an Addition, or further, and fresh Supplies of Grace in his Heart, to furnish his Lamp of Profession, to make it burn continually, clearly, and not go out.

V. *It is Oyl which makes a Lamp to burn*, and to give light to him that hath it, and to others also, or otherwise the bare empty Lamp signifies just nothing: So it is true Grace in daily Exercise that makes a Professor in his Conversation to give light, and to shine in Holiness, by which his Profession tends to his own Profit, and to the Benefit of others. A bare Profession signifies just nothing without true Grace and Holiness: *Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven.*

Mat. 5. 16.

VI. *Lamps must be daily trimmed, or else they will burn very dimly*, and give but little light, the trimming a Lamp (or Candle,) is to prevent what hinders (or obstructs) its burning; (we sometimes say, *There is a thief in Candle*) the Lamp or Candle must be snuff'd, or dead ashes, or something or another may hinder its burning clearly, so as to give a good light. Even so must the Lamp of Profession be carefully trimmed, or every thing be removed that may prevent, hinder, or obstruct a Christian Profession from giving a clear light. Sin is like a thief in the Candle, it will waste it, and spoil or hinder a mans Profession from shining, or the Corruptions of the Heart, the Lusts of the Flesh, and inordinate Love of the World, are like unto dead ashes, that hinder the Lamp of Profession from burning clear and bright. Therefore sin and corruptions thro' the Spirit must be mortified: *Brethren*, we must top or snuff the Lamps of Profession, or take

A Lamp trimmed gives a clear light.

Rom. 8. 13

away. the dead ashes of Unbelief, Pride, Carnality and Formality, or else our Lamps will burn very dimm, and be ready to go out.—And indeed the Lamp of Hypocrites, tho' they for a time seem to blaze or shine, yet they go in a little time quite out, which is occasioned,

1. By Reason they had not the right Oyl, it was counterfeit Grace, or not the right Lamp-oil, or the true Faith of Gods Elect.

2. It comes to pass also for want of trimming their Lamps, they neglect their Hearts, and are remiss in their Lives, and suffer Corruption, Deadness and Carnality, to prevail in them: for tho it was but common Grace that made their Lamps to give any light, yet had they trimmed them, or took more care of their outward Conversations, their Profession might have given more light, and have burned longer also.

VII. *The going out of the Lamp in a dark night is a very dismal and dangerous thing*, especially when a Person hath the greatest need of it: So it is a dismal thing for a Professor to have the Lamp of Profession to go out in the dark time of Temptation, or in a time of dark Providences, or perhaps just before the Bridegrooms coming.

Secondly, *To what Custom doth our Saviour here referr, or by taking Lamps alludeth unto.*

1. *Ans.* No doubt our Lord hereby alludes to the Custom of the Jews and other People in those Eastern Countrys, who held their Nuptial or Marriage Feasts in the Night, from whence this Parable is taken. *The Custom was this*: viz. Young men and Virgins in the night went forth to meet the Bridegroom, as he was coming to the Marriage Chamber; among the Jews, it was with Lamps, and among the Romans with Torches. Among the Jews all that were invited were bid to bring their burning Lamps with them, and by the bright shining, or clear Light of their Lamps, the Glory of the Marriage Solemnities were much greater, the Light of those Lamps shining by them; and such who had not Lamps lighted and burning, were not admitted into the Wedding Chamber.

Grotius.

The Custom of the Jews at their Weddings.

2. Our Saviour also may allude to Lamps here, because a Lamp or a Candle is a proper light for us in the night; and hence David saith, *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet*: not only a light as of the Sun by day, or in Prosperity, but as a Lamp in the Night of Adversity, or under dismal and dark Dispensations, or amazing Providences, and times of Temptation.

Ps. 119. 105.

Iſa. 62. 1.

Luk. 12.
35, 36.

3. A Lamp burning with clear Light, may denote a true Believers Readiness for to meet the Bridegroom in the Marriage Chamber; the Righteousness of the Saints in Sion is compared to a Lamp that burneth, and to this our Lord alludeth in another place: *Let your Loyns be girded, and your Lights burning, and you your selves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.* That is, be every way ready. The Bridegroom being come to the Marriage Chamber amongst the Jews, it seems on a sudden knockt, to let the Virgins of the Bride Chamber in; but none, as I said, were admitted but such who had their Lamps lighted and clearly burning. So none shall be admitted into the Marriage Chamber by Jesus Christ, but such who are ready, having not only Lamps, but Oyl in their vessels, and who in Grace and Holiness shine in their Conversation.

Rom. 6.

17.

2 Tim. 1. 13

1 Tim. 3. 5

Some in our days pretend to have Oyl in their vessels, (*i. e.*) saving Grace in their Hearts, who have not right-made Lamps, that is, they have not the true Profession of the Christian Faith; they boast of the Power of Godliness, but condemn the true Form, or have not kept that Form of Doctrine that was once delivered by Christ and his Apostles;

'Tis also called the *Form of sound Words*, and also the *Form of Godliness*. These men have a form of their own Devising, but neither have the true Constitution of a Gospel Church, nor the Doctrine and discipline thereof, but pretend to walk by the light which is within them (and in all men,) which can't either discover the true Christ, the true Faith, nor the true Church; for neither of these are known but by the Gospel, (or the sacred Word of God)—It is good and commendable to have Lamps, nay, absolutely necessary, and such that are also fashioned by the unerring Pattern, tho without Oyl that Lamp will avail no man any thing, we must have both the Form and the Power of Godliness.

And went forth, &c.

1. Their going forth doth doubtless imply that all these Virgins looked upon themselves to be chosen and invited Persons, (or such that were called to attend the Bridegroom on the Marriage day) *i. e.* they all thought themselves to be Saints and godly Christians, tho some of them were mistaken.

2. Their going forth may denote their great Expectation of being received and kindly entertained by Jesus Christ, when he comes; this certainly must needs be meant hereby: who would go forth to meet the Bridegroom as Virgins of the

Marriage Chamber, (according to the Custom of the People in those Eastern Nations) that did not conclude they were some of those select and chosen ones, to attend the Bridegroom?

3. It may also signifie that desire and longing which they seemed to have, to see and behold the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

4. Their going forth before denotes that visible Profession they made of Jesus Christ, owning his Worship and Ordinances, which our Lord hath appointed to remain in the Church until he comes, as Baptism and the Lords Supper: *Let us go forth to him without the camp bearing his Reproach.* To this also the holy Ghost alludes in the sacred Song, *Go thou forth by the footsteps of the flock.*

Cant. 1. 7.

5. This going forth to meet the Bridegroom in the wise Virgins, may denote their great Love and Affections to the Lord Jesus Christ, and their longings to see him, as when Isaac went forth to meet Rebecca—and Joseph went forth to meet his Father Jacob; it is for full Enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gen. 46.
29.

6. It may also denote that great Confidence that was in all these Professors and Church-Members. *My Brethren*, there are a number of Persons that may have great Confidence, both living and dying, and yet at last may be disappointed—Nay, and Christ (as one observes) can hardly beat them off from their hope and confidence: *I tell you I know you not—I profess I know ye not.* The wise Virgins knew not there were so many foolish ones among them, they took them to be true Christians: O what need have we to try and examine our selves, and see whether Christ be in us or not, or whether we have Oyl in our vessels or not. Some think they are in a good Estate, because they are Hearers of the Word; but alas these did not only hear, but obeyed Christ in all his external Ordinances, and were Members of his Church, and held Communion with the Saints, and went out into a visible Profession, with Expectation to meet the Bridegroom.

Doct. That Jesus Christ at his second coming, cometh or will come as a Bridegroom to his People, to marry his Spouse, and then will publicly hold his Marriage Solemnity.

Those Expositors, who in speaking to this Parable, make it their chief Business to open the Souls Espousal to Christ, I humbly think, greatly mistake the Scope and Design of our Lord; for that I think is not so much intended here, as 'tis to put us mind of his coming to the Marriage Chamber at the last day, and to be ready for it: as to the espousing of Christ, which

See the Pa-
rable of the
Marriage
Supper
opened.

I have spoken to that in opening the *Parable of the Marriage Supper*, to which I shall refer my Reader. I shall not therefore insist upon Matters of that Nature here.

Now in speaking to this Proposition,

1. *I shall prove the Truth thereof.*
2. *Shew what a day of Solemnity that day will be.*
3. *Apply it.*

I have shewed already that Christ is the Bridegroom here meant; and the present time, my Brethren, is the wooing time, or the day of our Espousal to the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is said, *a Virgin espoused is a Mans Wife*, and from hence the Church is called *the Lambs Wife*, who shall be presented a *chast Virgin unto Christ*, which shews the publick Marriage Day is not yet come, tho Ministers (as Christs Spokesmen) are said to espouse sinners to him, and they are also said now to be married to him. *Let us be glad, and rejoyce, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready.* This time refers to the day of Christs second coming.—But

2 Cor. 11.

Rom. 7.4.

Rev. 19.7.

Secondly, To shew you what a glorious Solemnity that Marriage Day will be.

What a
kind of day
the marri-
age day
will be.

I. It will be a day of clearing up, or resolving of all Doubts, and for ever scattering of all Fears. May be many godly Christians now do much question the Truth and Sincerity of their Faith in, and Love to the Lord Jesus Christ; but then it will be fully known they did truly believe in him, and sincerely love him, and they shall never have any more doubts about it.

Rev. 3.9.

II. This Marriage Day will be the day of the Manifestation of the Greatness of the Love of Christ to his Spouse, and unto every Believer, I mean they shall more clearly and sensibly know the Greatness of his Love to every one of their precious Souls in that day; *And to know that I have loved thee.* True by his Word and Providences Christ makes this partly known now, but not so fully as he will in that day, and not make it manifest to themselves only, but others shall in that day know it also, who perhaps thought that Christ loved them not, because he so sorely afflicted them whilest in this World.

Cant. 3.11.

III. It will be a day *without Clouds*, all Darknes shall then for ever be vanquished, and all Tears wiped away from the Faces of all Gods Children; it will be the day of Joy and Gladness of Christs Heart, and of the Hearts of all Believers; (Crowns were wont to be worn on the Marriage day of a Prince:) So Christ then will not only have his Crown on his Head, but his

Spouse and beloved Bride shall be crowned also; yea, every Believer shall in that day have a Crown of Glory on his Head; Christ will rejoyce over his Bride, and she shall rejoyce with him with unspeakable Joy, their Hearts shall rejoyce: *But I will see you again, and your Hearts shall rejoyce, and your Joy no man taketh from you.* No day like this Marriage day, and good Reason there will be for it.

Joh. 16.22

IV. It will be a day of great Glory and Splendor, which may appear by considering these things following.

1. *Jesus Christ will appear then like a glorious King* in all his Royalties, such a King before did no created being ever behold; (tho in a figure Peter, James and John had a small Representation of his Glory in the holy mount in the Transfiguration:) my Brethren, some have been amazed to behold the Glory of an earthly Prince on his Marriage day, and no doubt but the Marriage of King Solomon with Pharaohs Daughter (which might be a Type of this Solemnity) exceeded all that ever was on Earth.—But O what will be the Glory of this day, when the Son of God will have on all his Rich and Glorious Wedding Robes, and appear in the Glory of the Father, and when his Spouse the Queen shall also be brought unto the King, in Raiment of Needle-work, and stand before him cloathed with wrought Gold of Ophir, when Christ who is our Life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in Glory. The heavenly Queen will on that day shine in rich heavenly Pearl, Jewels and Diamonds.

Ps. 45.9.

Verf. 13.1

Col. 3.4.1

2. In respect of that glorious Attendance or Retinue, which Jesus Christ and his Bride shall have to wait upon them; viz. all the mighty and glorious Angels, whose Glory before will be very great, and no doubt but their Glory (tho they are Spirits) shall be manifested to the Saints. Sirs, poor Believers now lie among the Pots; but what faith the Lord? *Tho ye have lain among the Pots, yet shall your wings be as the wings of a Dove, covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold.*

Ps. 68.13.

V. The Glory and Happiness of the Saints in that day will be wonderful, in respect of the sight that will be then seen.

(1.) The admirable Glory of the Father, which will appear in the Person of Jesus Christ, for otherwise no created Being could behold; *for they shall see God.* I do not say the Essence of God, for such who affirm that (I humbly conceive) they know not what they say; but in Christs Person as a proper Medium we shall see the Father. And

1 Joh. 3.1, 2.

(2.) We shall behold Christ as he is, now glorified in Heaven.

D d d d d

(3.)

(3.) We shall also see all the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, blessed Martyrs and Ministers, and all the Saints of Jesus Christ, that ever lived; O what a sight will that be!

VI. It will be a glorious Solemnity, in respect of that heavenly Melody; O what Songs will they be, that the heavenly Hosts of Saints and Angels shall sing; no Mortal (be sure) could hear it; it will be so ravishing, when all the Saints shall joyn with the Angels, and sing in sweet Confort.

VII. In respect of those Rivers of celestial Pleasures, which will abide for evermore; they will be pure, sweet, and soul-satisfying Pleasures, without any stinging, cloying or surfeiting: all the choicest (and lawful) Delights and Pleasures of this World are, my Brethren, but a shadow of those heavenly Pleasures: *In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are Pleasures for evermore.* — Thou wilt make them drink of the Rivers of thy Pleasures.

Rivers denote the Quantity or Abundance of them; thy Pleasures, thy Joys they are the Joys of our Lord, that signifies the Quality of them.

VIII. In respect of that wonderful Knowledge Believers shall attain unto: *When that which is perfect is come, then shall that which is in part be done away.* — But then we shall know as we are known.

Whilest, Brethren, we are here in this Body, we know as Children, see as Children, but then we shall arrive to perfection in Knowledge, we shall know fully, or in a great and wonderful manner, tho not in the same Degree of the Fulness and Perfection whereby God knows us, for that is impossible, how large soever the vessel be; for God is infinite, and we (tho' glorified) are but finite Creatures. However we shall have a wonderful Knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, and of the Secrets of God, of his Decrees and Purposes which here we understand and look darkly into: and also shall know more fully the Nature of Gods redeeming Love, Christs redeeming Love, and his espousing Love. Moreover we shall have a full Knowledge of one another, and of all the Saints, whom we never saw before, tho we heard much of them. Certainly one great part of the Glory of that day will consist in that amazing Knowledge we shall arrive at. My Brethren, We shall know then what Heaven is; Ah what a little do we now understand of that glorious Place, which is called Paradise, and the Throne of God.

IX. I might speak of the Power, Rule and Authority, which the Saints shall

have in that day, and how Kings shall bow down before them, and men and Devils be judged by them; the Saints (with Christ) shall judge the World.

APPLICATION.

1. *Infer.* We may from hence see what Fools the men of the World are, who slight all the Joys above, and contemn the Glory of this happy day, they are more pleased with Toys and Rattles, than with true Riches, Glory and satisfying Delights and Pleasures of Heaven; they value the Shadow above the Substance, they would be seemingly happy for one day, and choose that rather, than be really and eternally happy, or happy indeed; if there was, Sirs, no Punishment of Pain, yet O what will be the Punishment of loss, to lose God, Christ, and everlasting Joys and Consolations, what's such a loss?

2. *Be Exhorted.* you that are Professors and Children of God, to prepare to meet the Bridegroom of your Souls.

For MOTIVES.

1. Consider, the Design and Scope of this Parable, is (as I said) to excite us all to a due Preparation, or to be ready for the Marriage day.

2. Consider that you are espoused, who are true Believers, by Jesus Christ; you are the Persons whom the King in that day will publicly marry, and embrace in his Arms, and crown with Glory, and set down in his Throne. O make ready, hast to the Wedding Chamber.

3. You are gone forth by your visible Profession to meet the Bridegroom, you are gone out of your selves, trust not in your selves, and be gone out of Babylon, and out of all false worship; you are therefore called Virgins, this is really so, or but in Appearance only. O how sad will it be, if it be not in Reality: Let this Motive stir us all up to a due Preparation for the Marriage day.

4. Consider that now the Bridegrooms coming is very near, now the slumbering time of the Virgins is upon us, tho near gone, and all things long towards the time of the end. Some years ago what a Cry was heard, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*, and with what Expectation did many in this Nation go forth to meet him, not thinking he would yet tarry: This is that time in which he is said to tarry, but 'tis near expired. Tho' I look for a dark hour just before the day-break.

5. Consider the End and Design of the whole of the Christian Religion, is to enjoy the lovely Bridegroom. Brethren, The End, I say, of all our Religion, Faith, and Expectation is lost as to us, if you and I are not prepared and absolutely ready

The design of the whole of all Religion is to fit and prepare us for the Bridegrooms coming.

ready to meet Jesus Christ: Why did Christ die? why is the Gospel preached? why is Grace given? why are Prayers made? why is holy Watchfulness pressed upon us? why is Grace to be exercised? why are Trials and Afflictions patiently born, but that we might glorify God and Jesus Christ here, and be ready or fully prepared to meet him, be embraced by him, and glorified with him for evermore? Is our Hope in this Life? God forbid; for then we are of all men most miserable: Is not the end of our Faith the Salvation of our Souls?

6. None but they only that were ready, went into the Wedding Chamber, the door was shut against all others; or rather it will be shut, and how vain then will all their Religion be, who are unprepared! what will the foolish Virgins do at that day? Many Professors do but deceive themselves and others, who think they are going to Heaven, when they are indeed going to Hell.

7. It is, my Brethren, a great Disparagement to the Lord Jesus Christ; nay, a slighting of him, and a casting contempt upon his glorious Appearance, not to be prepared for his coming, as if he was not worthy of our utmost Diligence, or as if this was not matter of the highest Importance.

8. Consider, that our Carelessness about preparing for Christs coming, bespeaks Want of Love to him: what love the Lord Jesus, and not prepare for the Marriage day? moreover it may bespeak the Want of Faith touching his Appearance, and this because he seems to delay his coming. About fifty years ago what a mighty Expectation was there of Christs coming, and of the near approaching of his Kingdom; (but Lo, an amazing hour intervenes) and a Second War is commenced by the beast, and all this tending to the slaying the Witnesses, by which great Security seized upon the Lords People, and but few now think or speak of Christs Kingdom; it is but little talk of, and doth not this intimate a Declension of Love to him? The love of many waxeth cold. Most Professors pursue the World, and I fear serve the World, and forget their Sovereign, and as the Proverb goes, Out of sight, out of mind.

9. We read of great preparation, and Purifications of Virgins for their Marriages with earthly Princes; and shall not these Spiritual Virgins labour after Soul-preparation and Purification for their Marriage with the Prince of Heaven and Earth? see Esther 2. 12. Now when every maids turn was come to go to the King, after she had been twelve Months, for so were the days of their purification accomplished, to wit six Month with Oyl of Myrrh, and six Months with sweet Odours: Thus these Vir-

gins were prepared and purified to be accepted by the King *Ahasuerus*, and shall not Believers much more strive to be prepared, beautified, and perfumed with all the sweet Odours of divine and rich Oyl of the Spirit, and precious Grace for the embraces of Jesus Christ, the Bridgroom of their Souls, and King of Heaven and Earth.

II. By way of Caution. Let the Virgins take heed they are not mistaken touching their state, and by self Confidence, or by a feigned, and meer presumptuous Faith deceive themselves, and rest in a hope that will make them ashamed, such as the foolish virgins had: A true Believers hope is such that it maketh them not ashamed: *And hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost; no, no, it is a hope that he that hath it, is purged and purified: He that hath this hope in him, purifies himself even as he is pure.* 1 Joh. 3. 3. This hope! what hope? why hope when Christ appears to be like unto him, prepared for him, and to see him as he is. Grace, whether it be the Grace of Faith, Hope or Love, is of a soul-transforming and heart-purifying Nature; Grace hath in it a sanctifying quality.

III. Trial, my Brethren, what need is there that we try and examine ourselves as to our Graces and Safeness of our condition, and about that due preparation called for.—And in Order to this, let me hint some of my Fears. Sirs, the present state of Professors makes it appear doubtful, whether many have true Faith in, and Love to Christ or not.

1. For Religion in the Notion of it, it may be feared is got too much in the Heads of many, but too little if at all into their Hearts and Lives.

2. Many also are found smiting their fellow-servants, by reproaching and vilifying them. What scandals have some Ministers unjustly cast upon others, and some wicked members, false Brethren raised and spread of faithful Ministers.

3. What may we think of the General Decay of the Power of Religion and practical Godliness? the Power of which lies, (1.) In a contempt of this World, and in being weaned from it, or in dying to all earthly things. (2.) In self-Denial, Humility and self-Abasement. (3.) In holy walking with God in Prayer, Watchfulness, Meditation, Mortification, and in a great Restlessness after a further likeness unto God. (4.) In preferring the Good of others, and promoting Christs publick Interest with the Peace and Unity of the Churches.—But now alas, all generally seek their own things, not Christs things, not his Interest, not the Good of one another, not

con-

contemning, but rather loving the World; not seeking Peace, Love, and Union, but rather foment Strife, Discord, Divisions, and Contention in Churches; No doubt but these things are bad signs that there are many foolish Virgins in the Churches in these Days, and that the Bridegroom is near.

4. What is the Reason the coming and Kingdom of Jesus Christ is no more talk'd of? Are we, my Brethren, like those the psalmist speaks of, *They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power, to make known to the sons of men his noble Acts, and glorious Majesty of his Kingdom.* Alas now a days these things are little talked or spoken of, but Professors talk of the World, of their Trades, of their Losses, or else of their Notions, but not how to revive the cause of Christ, how to strengthen and preserve Peace, Love and Union, and to provoke one another unto good Works; but to conclude with this Proposition.

Counsel and
warning, to
sinners.

Sinners, What say you concerning Christs coming, you hear some that have Lamps and go forth to meet the Bridegroom, shall not be suffered to go in to the Wedding Chamber: O then what little ground have you to expect it! if Professors fall short, what will become of you that are prophane; you have no Oyl, no Lamps, nor see any Beauty in Christ to desire him; certainly your case will be very sad in that day, you are married to the World, to your Lusts, to your own foolish Opinions of your good Condition, while others are married to the Law, or to their own Righteousness, and others to Idolatry, to the Traditions of men, and to foolish Superstitions, and some others to their Errors, and to abominable and damnable Heresies.

O come, resolve to cleave to the Lord Jesus, embrace him, get Faith in him, cry to him, and leave your cursed sins and wicked ways; for know assuredly, Christ comes, he comes: *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give unto every one according as his works shall be.* If you do not go forth to meet him, he will quickly meet you, but not like a Bridegroom, not like a Lamb, but like a Lyon, like an Enemy to tare and devour you in his Wrath.

SERMON XIX.

Mat. XXV. 2.

And five were wise, and five were foolish.

FROM hence observe,

Doct. *That in the Church in the latter days, tho there will be some wise or pious Christians, yet there will be many foolish Professors, or false and hypocritical ones also.*

In speaking to this Point of Doctrine I shall

1. Shew what is meant here by Wisdom, or by being wise.
2. Shew wherein the Wisdom of pious Christians does consist.
3. Shew wherein the folly of the foolish also consisteth.
4. Apply it.

1. *Negatively*, I shall shew you wherein the Wisdom here meant does not consist.

It consisteth not in that which the men of the World call and count Wisdom.

1. Not in being wise or crafty to get the World, and to grow great and rich, or in getting Abundance of earthly Wealth; such men I know are counted wise, but these being not rich towards God, the Lord calls fools; *Thou fool, this night thy Soul shall be required of thee.* Is not he a fool that labours for the wind, and pursues a shadow? who in gaining the World loseth his own Soul?

2. True Wisdom is not in studying more the Knowledge of the Law of our Countrey, or Laws of the Land, than the Knowledge of the Law of God, and the Knowledge of Christ and his glorious Gospel; tho some cry up this sort to be wise men, understanding men, they know the Law, and can give as good Counsel as Lawyers themselves; and so they may, and yet be but grand fools, in respect of the Wisdom meant in this Parable; they study the Law, but study not the Knowledge of themselves, they know the Law, but know not Jesus Christ.

3. True Wisdom consisteth not in human Learning, or in the Knowledge of the Tongues, or of humane Arts and Sciences; 'tis not in them who esteem of the Knowledge of these things above the Knowledge of a crucified Christ, they have attained to *Natural, Moral, and Metaphysical*, and all curious Philosophical Notions, and these men are counted by some

some the only wise men; and such who have not this Knowledge, though endowed with true spiritual Knowledge and gifts from Christ, they are slighted and contemned by them. But this Wisdom is not that by which men come to know God in Christ: See what Paul saith:

1 Cor. 1. 20, 21. Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? — Again he saith, For after that in the wisdom of God, the World by wisdom knew not God; after that way, or according to the profound depths of Gods wisdom, the World by their wisdom knew not God; no, they were so far from approving or understanding the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, or as it is revealed in a crucified Christ, that they count it foolishness; that Wisdom that God counts Foolishness is magnified, and esteemed the chief Wisdom, and the Wisdom of God accounted by them Foolishness.

4. Nor doth this Wisdom consist in bare Head or meer speculative Knowledge, tho' it be in divine things; men may understand all Mysteries, and have all Knowledge, that is whatsoever is Notional or Speculative, whether divine or humane, and yet have not one dram of saving Wisdom: Knowledge puffs up, &c. such are conceited, and wise in their own eyes, and therefore Fools, and not wise men.

5. This Wisdom lies not, or consisteth not meerly in a wise and prudent behaviour, or in a mans wise and discreet management of himself, and of all his worldly affairs; for tho much folly may be in those who imprudently manage their earthly business and Concerns, yet such who with prudence order such matters, may utterly neglect their Souls, or seek not, regard not the things of another World. In a word, the wisdom our Lord refers to, is not worldly wisdom, or the wisdom that is from beneath.

2ly, In the Affirmative.

What it is to be wise indeed. Prov. 9. 10. Prov. 1. 7. Prov. 8. 13. 1. This Wisdom consisteth in the true fear of God: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, the beginning of Knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. And again Solomon saith, The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, arrogancy, and the evil way, &c.

No man is truly wise, that is not truly godly; all sinners are Fools, and are often so called.

True wisdom lies in knowing the chief good, and how to obtain and possess it. 2. This Wisdom lies in the knowledge of the chiefest Evil, so as to escape it, and in the Knowledge of the chief Good so as to obtain and possess it. Sin is the chiefest Evil, and God is the chief Good, and to know God truly in Christ, or with a saving Knowledge, is that Wisdom our Lord refers here to.

3. True Wisdom consisteth in know-

ing what we want to make us truly happy, and to endeavour to obtain that good which will make us blessed for ever. This is Life Eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. He that hath this Knowledge, i. e. that understands the Principle, together with the Means, and End, that universally is necessary to the possession, or enjoyment of that which renders a Man blessed in Soul and Body for ever, is certainly a wise Man. These things more generally shew what is true Wisdom; but more particularly.

I. A man that is truly wise knows himself, he knows the worth of his own Soul, together with the vast capacity and comprehension of it, and what Object can answer all its wants, fill all its desires, and yield it full and perfect satisfaction; which nothing can do but an Interest in God himself.

II. Now in order to this, he must know what it was which made his Soul miserable, nay both Soul and Body, which was the loss of God, and of his blessed Image by sin.

III. True Wisdom consisteth in the Knowledge not only of the Rectitude of Gods holy Nature and Attributes, but also in the Knowledge of the Law of God, which is a written Impression of his Image.

IV. Moreover, it consists in knowing how impossible it is for a man in his fallen state to be justified by his own Righteousness, in Obedience either to the Law or Gospel; he is wise that knows how Gods wrath is appeased to him, and his Justice satisfied, and hath obtained Remission of sin through the Blood of Christ: The foolishness of the Jews appeared in their ignorance of these things. Being ignorant of the Righteousness of God, &c. And in this also appeared the folly of the Greeks: Alas! they counted Justification by Christs Obedience, or by a slain or crucified Christ, to be foolishness, and thereby shewed themselves to be Fools, the worst of Fools, who thought all Fools but themselves.

V. True spiritual Wisdom consisteth not in knowing the way of Salvation only but the Means of it also. A man must know the Means as well as the Way and the End of every great undertaking; and so in this he that knows that Christ is the Way of Salvation, the End, the eternal enjoyment of God, yet if he knows not the means how to get into the way, or how to obtain an interest in Christ, and to abide in the way so as to obtain the End, is a Fool.

A man that wants health, or is sick, may hear of a remedy that infallibly will cure him, but if he knows not how it must be applyed, may die of his sickness notwithstanding the remedy he is told of: The Means is Union with Christ, Faith in Christ, the Spirit must apply the remedy, viz. Christs merits, Christs blood, and he that makes use of this Means, as he is in the way so he shall obtain the desired end, i. e. the salvation of his Soul:

Joh. 3. 14. *He that believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life:* And he that thus believes, as all wise Virgins do, attains to true Wisdom. Pray remember Christ is the Way, God is the End, and closing with Christ by Faith is the Means.

VI. From hence it appears that the Wisdom of the wise Virgins consisteth in building alone on the true Foundation; not only knowing it, but in building rightly upon it: Some build on the Sands, and Mat. 7. 26. they our Lord compares to foolish men, See that Si- some build on self Principles, or without militate o- a foundation, and what folly is that? pend.

True wis- VII. True Wisdom consists in a right dom consist- and direct motion towards the End; he eth in a that misseth the End, which is the glory of God, will miss of Happiness, miss the right and direct moti- End, and all Endeavours and Knowledg on towards are vain and fruitless: Some aim at a good the great end, Name, some seek Applause, some follow Christ for profit, or for Loaves; now all these are foolish persons, the wise only aim at God, seek the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and to enjoy him for Ever.

But perhaps self happiness is the only End some aim at, all their care and business is to be saved — and some of this sort are ready to say, What may I not be saved, if I do not this or that? may I not be saved except I am baptized, and come into this or that Church, and break Bread, or tho I pray not so often as some do, and hear not so many Sermons, as if nothing was to be done for Christs sake, or to glorifie God, and to manifest our love to Jesus Christ, and our subjection to him as our Prince as well as our Saviour.

True wisdom VIII. The true Wisdom of the wise consists in a Virgins does consist in a timely making timely ma- use of the Means; they would not be king use of the means. contented with empty Lamps, nor would they fall into a slumber before they have provided Oyl in their Vessels, or have it to seek when the Bridegroom was come:

The foolish ones missed it here, they took Lamps, but no Oyl in their Vessels, nor saw the need of it until it was too late: *Why is there a price in the hands of a Fool to get Wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it.* He is a wise man that takes

hold of the present Opportunity, or who redeems the time; such as soon as they are sick, will seek out for a Physician, and another buys what he wants before the Market be over, and also sows in the proper season, and not defer sowing to the time when he should reap.

IX. True Wisdom consisteth in preferring the concerns of the Soul above the Body, or in a greater care how to Live for ever hereafter, than how to live here for a moment, or in labouring more for the Meat that perisheth not, than for that which perisheth.

X. In valuing Grace above a visible Profession, or in prizing the Grace of Gods Word above the hearing the word of his Grace; the one is for the Cabinet, the other for the Jewel, the one is for the Gospel in word only, the other is for the Gospel in its power and inward Efficacy also.

XI. He that is truly wise will try his Heart, try his Faith, try his Love, and ponder his Paths, understand his Way, and look well to his goings, he will not take up things on trust, nor see with other mens Eyes (as to matters of Faith and Practice:) Moreover, he is for the reduction of what he knows unto the Rule of Practice: *Be ye doers of the Word* Jam. 3. 13. *not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* They are Fools that are contented with bare hearing. Such that are wise, are greatly concerned about the state and frame of their Hearts, being not satisfied only to have Life, but would be lively also.

XII. True wisdom does consist in getting a sure Title, and a proper meetness for Eternal Life; the wise Virgins had a sure and certain title to Eternal Blessedness: tho they were fallen (thro Sata's temptations) into a slumbering frame, and also it appears they had a meetness for Heaven, and entred into the Wedding Chamber: I do not say they had this meetness to such a degree when they fell asleep, but they were awakened, and trimmed their Lamps, and so fitted for the Bridegrooms coming.

APPLICATION.

1. We may from hence infer, there are but few truly wise: O what folly abounds in the World.

2. It informs us also that the men of the World are justly to be charged with the greatest folly, in counting the godly Fools, for that which wicked men think is their folly and madness, is the greatest wisdom.

Exhort.

Exhort. *Exhort.* Labour after this Wisdom, let this be all our care.

For Motives,

1. Consider that many Professors are Fools in their Profession; O how sad is it! Men count them Fools because they are Professors, and God calls them Fools because they are no more but Professors.

2. Consider this, spiritual Wisdom is the only true wisdom, and none but the Saints, none (as I told you) are wise, but Believers, or godly persons.

3. This is the way to Honour: *The Prov. 3. 35. wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of Fools.* That wisdom which raises some mens Name and Honour in the World, is Foolishness with God; but godly men Christ honours, and the Father will honour them also. *Joh. 12. 26*

4. These Persons God will commend for ever for that Wisdom he gave them; when all others shall be confounded for their folly and madness.

But to proceed,

And five were foolish.

That is, five were no more than Professors, or not sincere Christians, they had no more than a Name, or Lamps, and no Oyl in their Vessels: They were graceless wretches; the Church it appears, hath good and bad in it, Hypocrites, as well as true Believers.

Doct. Hypocrites are foolish Persons, or False Professors are Fools.

1. *I shall shew you wherein the folly of these Professors does consist.*

2. *Apply it.*

Wherin the folly of the foolish Virgins consisteth. 1. The folly of these Professors, called here *foolish Virgins*, consisteth in their attaining to some degrees of the Knowledge of the way of Salvation, and yet have no interest in the blessed Saviour, and so prefer an empty or bare profession without the power of it, or in getting Lamps but no Oyl, and so prefer the Name of Christ above the Nature of Christ; this discovers they are Fools.

Not to use Means, or not rightly and timely to use it is great folly. 2. In that they had the means but never used it, a price in their hands but no heart to improve it; not to use the proper means to attain any great thing, or to make use of false and improper means, or not timely to use the true means, or to rest wholly in the means, are like folly, or grand foolishness; but all these acts of folly, are these Professors or foolish Virgins guilty of; they might be under the proper means, viz. the preaching of the Word, but used it not, they made use of false Means, i.e. they went to buy Oyl of the Wise Virgins, they

went to him that sold Oyl, but it was not timely, but when it was too late, and no doubt rested wholly a long time upon the bare use of the external Means, as the Preaching of the Word and outward Ordinances.

3. To sleep in Harvest, or come to the Market when it is over, certainly argues *Not to provide for a time of need is great folly.* great folly in such persons; to know that Winter will come, and yet make no provision for it, discovers the man void of wisdom; to foresee the Evil, and yet take no due care to prevent it, is great folly.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple (i.e. fools) pass on, and are punished. And according to the nature of the Evil foreseen, or forewarned of, when endeavours are not used to avoid it, such is the degree of the folly: Now what is a greater evil than the loss of God, Christ, and the immortal Soul? but these Evils they might have foreseen, and of which they had warning, yet persisted on in the neglect of laying hold of Christ, or in seeking timely Faith in him, and so to be prepared for his coming.

4. Their folly consisteth in running the greatest hazard, and yet think themselves safe, tho told they are running into a *Folly to run the greatest hazard till no help for it.* Lions Den. What greater madness can there be, than not to see nor believe most dismal danger (tho told of it a thousand times) untill it is too late, and there is no remedy, none can help them, in this their folly consisteth.

5. Is it not great folly to refuse to cut off a corrupt and rotten Member, when *Folly not to cut off a rotten and putrified member.* told Death will inevitably ensue, or their Life must go if it be not done? Or for a person to refuse a bitter potion, and rather choose to die than to take it, this shews the person is either not sensible or else a great Fool: Now these Professors refused to pull out a right Eye sin, and refused to have a right Hand sin cut off, tho they were assured by Christ himself if they thus refused to do, their whole Soul and Body should be cast into Hell. These persons rather chose to be damned for their sins, than to suffer the pain of the Mortification of their sins, therefore were Fools.

6. Their Folly consisteth in believing *Folly to believe Satan, or trust a deceitful heart.* the Father of Lies, and in trusting in their own hearts, when nothing is more deceitful; Satan no doubt perswaded them their Hearts and States were good, and they saw not how they were deceived, untill the Bridegroom came. Is it not folly to think to reap, and never sow? Or sow Tares, and yet hope to reap Wheat? or to expect to get the Victory and never fight, or to win the Prize and never run? or to delay that work which will take up all our days on Earth, to one Hour or Moment a little before Death? It discovers the greatest folly any can be guilty

guilty of; but this folly appears in these persons, and therefore might be well called foolish persons.

7. To value the good Opinion, and have the approbation of men, above the Love of Christ and the approbation of God, is folly with a witness; but this these foolish Virgins do: they desire to be called Saints, tho they are Sinners, and strive to keep up in the good Opinion of men, but never laboured above all things to be accepted of God, and therefore are fools.

8. Their folly consisteth in losing the Love, both of God and the World; nay, and in exposing themselves to the Wrath of God and Man: For because they are Professors of Religion, and free from Idolatry, and will not worship with the World, or be defiled with Popish Superstitions, they are hated of men, and perhaps suffer hard things; (for a man may give this body to be burned, and have no true love to God,) and because they are Hypocrites, or no more than bare Professors, God hates them, so that they may be said to lose Earth and Heaven too, and therefore are called foolish Virgins.

APPLICATION.

1 Infer.

I. We may from hence infer, that the visible Church is made up of a mixture; the Net of the Gospel takes good and bad.

2 Infer.

II. We infer also that Hypocrisie is hard to be discovered; for had the foolish Virgins been known to the Church, be sure they had not so long continued in it; but doubtless the wise Virgins knew them not, but took them for true Christians; nay, (as one observes) could Hypocrites be discerned, they should not be received, because matter fit to ruin a Church, are not fit to make a Church.

Mr. Shepard, on this Parable, p. 119.

3 Infer.

III. We infer that 'tis no wonder there is so much Trouble in Churches, such Contention, Strife and Quarelling, and many disorderly Walkers (for tho' it is true, thro' Temptation, it may sometimes be occasioned by such that are sincere) yet commonly no doubt it riseth from the rubbish, I mean, Hypocrites that get in among them; and from hence it is there is so much Work on days of Discipline, and also by reason of this sort Religion and the Church of Christ is exposed to Reproach.

4 Infer.

IV. Also from hence it appears that no Church is pure or free from Chaff or hypocritical members; nay, and in the latter day it appears the Church does abound with false Professors; five were wise, and five were foolish. I will not say there are

as many foolish as are wise, (tho some think it may be so from these Expressions) yet certainly it signifies that there are or will be many corrupt and false-hearted ones in the Churches in these latter days.

Quest. From whence doth it come to pass that so many unsound persons get into the Church?

1. Answ. Certainly, it ariseth from the subtilty of Satan, who by his cunning wiles deceives poor mortals, together by the reason of that great Deceit or Deceivableness that is in the Heart.

2. From the malice of Satan, who is an Enemy to Purity, who being an unclean Spirit himself; if he could, would make Heaven it self unclean, but that being beyond his Power or Policy; hence he strives to pollute the visible Church, and stain the Beauty and Glory thereof.

3. It may arise from the carelessness of the Church and Ministers thereof, in not being so strict and careful as they ought about examining all persons, whom they receive as Members among them; and this also should be a mighty Caution to them, to watch, and be very diligent and careful in this matter: *While men slept, the enemy sowed tares.*

4. It also may arise from the carelessness of these foolish ones themselves, in not trying, searching and thoroughly examining their own Hearts; for certainly many think who are Hypocrites, their State is good, and they are true Believers: Moreover, common Grace, common Operations of the Spirit, much resemble true and saving Operations.

V. From hence let all Professors and Church Members be exhorted to have a jealous eye over their own hearts, lest they are deceived and be undone for ever.

But to proceed.

They that were foolish took their Lamps, and took no Oyl with them, vers. 4.

Pray well observe the first verse of this Chapter,

They took their Lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

That is, All of them, but the foolish took no Oyl with them; that is (as I noted) in their vessels, (i. e.) they had no true Grace in their Hearts. This *going forth* some think refers to the time of the Witnesses finishing their Testimony. We know that there was a wonderful Expectation of the coming of the Bridegroom about fifty years ago, in this street of the great City, where (as I conceive the Witnesses about those times arrived to the top of their Testimony) and then might be said to *go forth*, in expectation of Christs

Christs sudden coming to set up his more visible and glorious Kingdom.

Took no Oyl, &c.

Certainly, They going forth in the night, or in a day-time, had some kind of Oyl in their Lamps that gave some light, tho' it was not of the right sort; for else how could they say as they do afterwards, *Our Lamps are gone out?*

Doth not that imply their Lamps had been lighted and did burn for a time; therefore by their taking no Oyl must be meant no saving Grace, or they went forth without having obtained like precious Faith, or the Faith of Gods Elect, they were graceless Persons, and had not the Spirit of God in its saving Graces and Operations in their Souls. For by Oyl I understand first is meant the Spirit of God, which is often compared to Oyl: *Therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladness above thy fellows;* this is that *anointing which we have received* in Christ, and that abideth in us, or *that Unction from the Holy one*, by which we know all things necessary to Salvation.

Secondly, By the Oyl here also most Expositors understand is meant saving Grace: Thus one expresseth himself, 'By Oyl I understand (saith he) the saving Grace of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, true justifying Faith, Repentance, never to be repented of, and Love out of a pure Heart. And by taking no Oyl I understand (saith he) the true saving Grace of God in the Heart. Another worthy Writer also saith, (having confuted the foolish Notions of the blind Papists) 'But by Oyl is meant the Spirit of Christ, and the Graces of it, peculiar to all the Elect.

Now the Spirit and Graces of the Spirit may be, and is compared to Oyl from the Nature or Quality of it. Grace is compared to leaven from some of the Qualities of Leaven; to the Wind, to Water, to Fire, upon the Consideration of the Nature of those things; and so here the Spirit and saving Grace is compared to Oyl, from the Qualities or Nature thereof, tho in respect of one or two of its Properties chiefly in this place.

1. Oyl is of a softning, a mollifying and healing Nature; and so is the Spirit and Grace of God.

2. Oyl is contrary to Scorpions, and expells Poyson; so is Grace also contrary to Satan, *that Old Serpent*, and it also expells the Poyson of sin and Satans Temptations.

3. Oyl will not mingle or incorporate with other liquid things, but it will be always uppermost: So Grace, whether considered in the Spring (from whence it pro-

ceeds) or in respect of the subject of it, and its own quality; it will not mingle with any other thing, it will not mix with a mans own Righteousness; it will not mingle or mix with works, much less will it mingle with sin, or the inordinate Love of the World, neither will free Grace mix with *free Will*, take Grace for the Favor of God, the rich bounty and good Will of God, it will not mingle with any of these things; or take it (as principally meant here) for the Fruits of the Spirit, or Effects of Gods Special Grace and Love, it will mix with nothing that is contrary to its own Nature: Moreover Grace will reign, predominate, or be uppermost where it is received.

4. Oyl is of a reviving Nature, and opens Obstructions, causing a man to breath freely: So Grace revives the Soul, and removes all Obstructions of Deadness and Unbelief, and causeth a Believer to breath forth his Desires freely unto God.

5. Oyl is of a feeding and fattening Nature, as well as beautifying, *it causeth the face to shine*: So Grace feeds, nay, fattens the Soul, and makes the Soul shine in Holiness and good Works.

6. And Lastly, And more directly (as intended here) it is Oyl that makes the Lamp to burn, that feeds it, and continues its Light: So the Grace of God in the Heart of a Believer makes his Life, Profession and Conversation to burn, and give much Light, and also as more Grace is given, so the Believers Lamp is continued burning.

7. If the Lamp be not fed with Oyl, with proper *Lamp Oyl*, it will soon go out: So for want of true Grace in the Heart the Lamp of the foolish Virgins went quite out, and were not true Believers supplied day by day with more Grace, their Lamps would go out also: There must be Oyl in the Vessel as well as in the Lamp; and so there must be Grace in our Hearts as well as gracious Acts and Holiness in our Lives, or in the Lamp of Profession, and in our Conversation.

Pray observe, both the wise and foolish Virgins had their Lamps, both professed the true Faith, owned the Doctrine of the Gospel, both went forth together into a visible Profession, both were Church Members, both were taken for true Christians, both went to meet the Bridegroom.

From hence note.

Doct. *That false Professors or foolish Virgins may go a great way in a Profession of Religion, and be taken for true Believers.*

In speaking to this Proposition,

1. *I shall briefly shew you how far the foolish Virgins may go.*

FFFFF

2. *Shew*

2. Shew wherein the wise outdo them, or differ from them.

3. Apply it.

My Brethren, Having in opening the Parable of the Sower, shewed you, how far the Stony and Thorny Ground Hearers may go, I shall be very brief in speaking to it here.—But

How far
the foolish
virgins
may go in
a profession
of Religion

I. They may hear the Word, and seemingly retain it, those persons signified by the Highway-side heard the Word, but Satan catch'd it presently out of their Hearts: But the foolish Virgins do more, they for some time seem to keep the Word, it takes some rooting in these.

II. They may for a time appear very zealous, and forward in hearing the Word preached; this sort of Professors followed our Saviour from place to place, nay, took shipping to go after him; but it was not (as our Lord told them) because they saw the Miracles which he did, not from a Love to his Person, nor to his Word, but because they eat of the Loaves, and were filled.

III. They may seem to delight to hear the Word, and to know the Ways of God: And delight to know my Ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness.—They take delight in Approaching to God These foolish Professors in Israel they knew the Will of God, and inquired after the Lord: They come unto thee as thy people come, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy Words, but they will not do them. Nay, the Word seemed sweet and pleasant to them; Thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an Instrument, &c. Who would think these were not sincere persons?

IV. They may receive the Word, so the stony and thorny ground hearers are said to do: They heard the Word, and anon they received it: They received the Word into their Heads, and were somewhat enlightened by it. They may believe, Simon also believed, &c. Many believed on his Name, when they saw the Miracles he did, but Jesus did not commit himself to them; so in Joh. 8. 30. they may have the Faith of Credence, a presumptuous Faith, a historical Faith, a temporary Faith; nay, may have the Faith of Miracles, and cast out Devils, and yet not have Grace, no Charity, no true Love to God, nor true Faith in Jesus Christ.

V. They may leave all gross Acts of sin, and reform their ways as to their outward Conversation, and so escape the Corruptions of the World, thro' that Knowledge which they have attained of

Jesus Christ. Herod when he heard John the Baptist, reformed many things.

VI. They may be enlightened, and also taste of the heavenly Gift; those high Attainments the Apostle mentions in Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. are no other than the Operations of the holy Ghost, which foolish Virgins, or hypocritical Professors may attain unto.

1. They may be enlightened or instructed in the clear Doctrine of the Gospel, or be illuminated with some kind of supernatural Light and Knowledge, by partaking of the Common Operations of the Spirit.

2. As to be under the Sense of the evil of sin, in respect of the guilt thereof; and see that sin is against the Nature of God, and hateful to him, but never come themselves to hate and abhor it, in respect of the defiling Nature of it.

3. They may also be so far enlightened as to know God is mans chief Good; for it Heathens came to discern this, much more this sort that had the common Illuminations of the Spirit.

4. They may be enlightened so far, as to know all the Essentials of the true Christian Religion.

5. To know the true Christ, and the Church in his Nature, Constitution, Government, and Discipline thereof.

VII. They may also taste of the heavenly Gift. (1.) The Doctrine and Ordinances of the Gospel are an heavenly Gift, and of this Gift they may taste. (2.) The extraordinary Operations of the holy Ghost are called the Gift of God: Because thou hast thought the Gift of God may be purchased with money. This heavenly Gift false or foolish Professors may taste of: In thy Name we have cast out Devils.—

And tho I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity; that is true Love to God: which shews it was possible a man might have such a Faith, and yet have no true Grace, or not have the Grace of Faith. (3.) The Gospel Dispensation in General is an heavenly Gift, of which Dispensation these have a taste of.

VIII. They may partake of the holy Ghost; so it is expressed, And were made partakers of the holy Ghost, &c. This, as Dr. Owen shews, is (in Effect) the same thing mentioned before (tho in different words expressed) they may partake of the common Operations, and common Gifts of the Spirit, which keep their Lamps for some time burning.

IX. They may taste of the good Word of God.

1. The good Word of God intends the Gospel, which Word they gave credit unto,

to, and so with some kind of faith tasted of it, and so are said to believe, or by and by to receive the Word with Joy, as the stony ground hearers are said to do.

2. They may taste some Sweetness in the Word of God, particularly in the Doctrine and Promises thereof; but a bare tasting may be where there is not a true Spiritual feeding on that Doctrine, and on those blessed Promises of the Word of God; nay, they may partake of such great gifts of the holy Ghost, as to become eminent Preachers of the Gospel, but whatsoever taste the foolish Virgins have of the good Word of God, they never digested it, so as to be fed, and nourished thereby.

X. They may taste of the Powers of the World to come.

Two things let me note here.

1. What is meant by the World to come.
2. What by tasting the Powers thereof.

(1.) Some here by the World to come assert is only meant the Gospel Church State, or Spiritual Kingdome of the Messiah. Dr. Owen seems to be of this Opinion; and if this be meant by the World to come, then their partaking of the miraculous Operations of the Spirit was their tasting of the Powers thereof.

(2.) But by the World to come I rather think the Apostle alludes to the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ, (when he appears the second time) which will be that new Heaven and new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.

(3.) As to their tasting of the World to come, it may be this, i. e.

1. They believe the Truth and Certainty of the Glory of the World to come; they give full credit to the Truth of that future State, in respect to the Resurrection and eternal Judgment, and to the mighty Power that will attend both; they believe the Revelation of those things concerning the World to come, and so are said to have a taste of them.

Moreover they may taste some fancy'd Sweetness in hope of the Joys of the World to come, and be under the restraining Power of the Spirit, thro' dread of the Punishment of the World to come.

XI. From hence it appears that the foolish Virgins may be baptized, break Bread, and so have external Communion with the Wife in the Church of God; for nothing is more clear than this, viz. that they were visible Church Members, nay, they may obey all external Ordinances of the Gospel, or Precepts of Jesus Christ.

XII. They may desire grace; Give us of your Oyl: they desire it, and ask it, but not of him, (or not in a right manner) who hath it to give.

XIII. They may pray, nay, be much in Prayer; for thus did the Pharisees, and desire others to pray for them: For so did Pharaoh and may have also much seeming Zeal for a time, and contribute to the poor Saints, tho not from a Principle of Love.

XIV. In a word (to close with this) they may be under a great visible Change, being formerly prophane and ungodly persons, they may be reformed, and to Appearance become other men, even great and notable Professors of Religion, and all may take them for Saints, and very little difference may appear between them and true Christians. Moreover they talk of Christs coming, and go out to meet him with the Wife.

Secondly, I shall shew you wherein the wise Virgins outdo them, or differ from them.

1. The Wife hear the Word, and hear it not with Joy only, but understand it also; that is, they have a true experimental Knowledge of the divine Power of it upon their Hearts. Their Hearts are thoroughly changed by the Efficacy and effectual workings of the Spirit; so that Regeneration passeth upon all their Souls, they are not only other men, but new men; they do not only assent to the Truth of the Word, or receive it into their Understanding, but with a full consent of their will close with Christ, and yield Obedience to him from the Heart.

2. They are not under the common; but special Illumination of the holy Ghost, their Convictions are not Legal but Evangelical, they are not convinced of the guilt, but also of the filth of sin, their Convictions are not chiefly of scandalous sins, but it reached their Hearts and secret sins also, and not only actual sins, but the evil of original sin likewise; and not only as sin is against them, and to their hurt and wounding, but also as it is against God, and hath wounded the Lord Jesus Christ; these things are the chief cause of their grief and sorrow: Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. It causeth them (from hence) to loath sin, and to loath themselves; yea, to abhor themselves, and to repent in dust and ashes. Common Convictions rise from the sence of God's Wrath, but special Convictions flow from the Sence of God's Love in Jesus Christ; they seeing a free Pardon of all their sins thro' Christs Blood offered to them, this melts them into Tears of Sorrow, mixt with Joy.

3. They are not only convinced of sin, (and particularly of the sin of Unbelief) but of Righteousness also.

II. They have not only a Taste of the good

good Word of God, but feed also upon it; their Taste and eating ariseth from Spiritual Hunger, or from a true sense of want; they have a craving Appetite, and nothing but God in Christ can satisfy their Souls, they digest the Word, they feed upon it, or live upon Christ by Faith, *Pf. 119. 97* and to them the Word is *sweeter than honey, or the honey comb*, that which they eat, is turned into good Nourishment, it being mixt with Faith it strengthens, revives and comforts them.

III. The Wise Virgins do not receive the holy Ghost only in the Gifts of it, but in all the Graces of it also; they have true Faith, unfeigned Love to Christ, and Hope that maketh not ashamed, and also attain to Humility, Temperance, Patience, and brotherly Kindness.

IV. The wise Virgins have all those things that accompany Salvation, or such

things that accompany a saved State. (1.) The holy Spirit, as the great new Covenant Promise. (2.) Union with Christ. (3.) A new Heart, or the Image of God created anew in them; they are *justified, adopted, and sanctified*. (4.) They have a dear love to the Saints, and as they are the Members of Christs Mystical Body, they minister to them, which is more, or a higher Attainment than any of the foolish Virgins arrive at.

V. The wise Virgins are sincere Christians, really in Heart before God what they appear to be before men, they act from right Principles and from right Motives, the Love of God and the Love of Christ stirs them up to follow him, to cleave to him, and to obey him in whatsoever he commands them; also they act to a right end, that God may be glorified, and Jesus Christ may be exalted.

SERMON XX.

MATTH. XXV. 5.

While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept.

SOME think this slumbering and sleeping of the Virgins refers to the *Sleep of Death*; they all slept, that is (say they) *they all dyed*. But certainly they are greatly mistaken who are of this Opinion.

1. Because when they were awakened, the foolish virgins were bid to go and buy Oyl, which will not be said unto any at the day of the Resurrection.

2. Because all the Virgins are said to rise out of this slumber and sleep at one and the same time, and trimmed their Lamps; but no Hypocrite or Unbelievers shall rise from the dead, when all that sleep in Jesus shall be raised, which will be at the very time when Christ comes; *1 Theff. 4. The dead in Christ shall rise first.*

3. Because they rose out of this sleep some time before the Bridegroom came, the foolish virgins after they were awakened, went to buy Oyl; *Ver. 10. But while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came.*

Before I speak to the slumbering and sleeping of the virgins, I shall speak to the *Bridegrooms tarrying.*

1. Some think our Lord refers to that long time between the Ascension of our Saviour, and his second coming, and how long that will be we know not, tho' most believe not more than *two thousand years*.

2. Others think he refers to that time which is between the time of the Souls Espousal to Christ, or Conversion, and the Marriage day.

3. Others perhaps upon better grounds *To what time the tarrying of the Bridegroom doth refer.* conclude, it refers to that Distance of time, that will be between some remarkable Signs and Expectation of Christs Appearance and his actual coming, and I rather adhere to this.

Certainly, These words refer to a time when all the Virgins shall be full of Expectation of Christs coming; nay, and when many would be very confident of it, by means of some Providences, Signs and Appearances, which I take was about *fifty years* ago; do but call to mind what an hour the Church was then under, and what wonderful Expectation was amongst the People of God in these Nations, and in

in other Nations and Kingdoms also? O what preaching and writing about the coming and Kingdom of our Lord, was there then? and what mighty things were upon the wheels, of which I gave you some brief hints before!

Archer. But lo after this time the Bridegroom
Brightman. tarries, he then came not, but all those
Tillinghborsh. brave men saw they were mistaken, and
Dr. Holmes. a dark Cloud (nor expected) comes upon
and many the Lords People both here and in other
more. Kingdoms and Nations, and this seeming
delay, I conceive, was partly the cause
of all the Virgins falling asleep, or into
a sleepy and slumbring Condition, which
drowsy frame of Spirit we are still under,
and shall I fear be for some time.

Hab. 2. 3. But know assuredly, that tho' the Lord
Jesus seems to tarry (or tarries past that
time his People longed for him) yet he
will not tarry one hour longer than the
appointed time — For yet a little while
he that shall come will come and will not tarry.
The least moment shall not exceed the
fixed time, that is determined: For the vi-
sion is for an appointed time, but at the end
it shall speak, and not lie, tho it tarry, wait
for it, because it will surely come and not
tarry.

Yet from these words, *Whilest the Bride-
groom tarried*, we may note,

1. That Christ comes not at that
time, when many of his own People looked
for him, and this we have seen clearly
fulfilled.

Mat. 24. 44. 2. That he will come when he is not
expected; *In such an hour ye think not the
Son of man cometh*; and that also some
shall be left to such Temptation, as to say
my Lord delayeth his coming, but such
who say thus in their Hearts, our Savi-
our calls *evil Servants*.

Ver. 48. 3. Moreover know, that when our Lord
comes, he comes suddenly, even as a
Thief in the night, and it will be very
surprizing, like a cry at midnight, when
many will be asleep, or very secure. And
are not many at this present time ready
to say in their Hearts, The day is afar off,
and perhaps one Reason of it may be from
the Boldness of some good men, who
have unadvisedly spoken of the Accom-
plishment of those things, which are to
precede his personal Appearance, as the
passing away of the second Wo, and the
utter Downfal of *Mystical Babylon*, by the
founding of the seventh Angel, *when the*
Rev. 11. 14. 15. *Kingdoms of this World shall become the*
Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.
The seventh Trumpet must sound, before
one of the seven Vials are poured forth;
and by the pouring forth of all the seven
Vials will the utter Ruin of the Beast and
mystery Babylon be accomplished. For as
a worthy Writer hath noted, The se-
venth Trumpet cannot declare the Ruine
of Antichrist, unless the seven Vials

be poured out under it, and the seventh
Trumpet soundeth soon after the slaying of
the Witnesses, which I hope is past: I
cannot with some others be yet of another
mind, but that they have a few Years
since been slain, and are now upon their
Feet, and that we are in that Cloud (tho
perhaps it may be yet darker) in which
they shall ascend. Doubtless they that think
that several of the Vials were poured out
under the sixth Trumpet, were grandly
mistaken, and were dark as to that part
of the sacred Vision.

But those good men, who too boldly
formerly, and of late time fixed on this
and that time or year, having been mi-
staken, hath, as I hinted, caused many
to be secure, and others to turn scoffers,
and say, as St. Peter intimates; *Where is* 2 Pet. 3. 2.
the Promise of his coming, — *Tho' the*
Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, &c.
It greatly behooveth us to consider of the
great Danger, which attends some peo-
ple by means of those great Disappoint-
ments they have seen, and by means
our Lord seems as they think to tarry,
the longer the Night is the more Oyl we
shall need, and greater Patience must be
exercised.

Quest. *Why doth our Lord Christ seem to
tarry?*

I. Ans. It may seem so to us in respect *Why Christ*
of the length of the time between Christs *tarries*.
first & second coming, and also because the
primitive Christians thought his coming
would have been very soon, even in their
days; whereas there are more than *sixteen*
hundred years since that run out, and yet
they waited for his coming from Hea-
ven, and thought the time very near; tho
Paul laboured to inform them better, as
you may see 2 Thess. 2. 1, 2, 3.

II. He may seem to us to tarry, by
Reason our days are short, and we reckon
not as God doth, to whom a thousand
years are but as one day, but it chiefly ri-
seth from our Ignorance of those mystical
Numbers left in Gods Word about the
end of the Wonders, and also of those
many things that must and shall precede
Christs *second* glorious Appearance, which
were we informed in and about, we
should not say our Lord tarries, or delays
his coming.

III. It may also arise by Reason of our
Impatience, or want of a due and quiet
Exercise thereof; *he that believeth maketh*
not hast: also by Reason those Disappoint-
ments some have laid us under, their times
being not the time *the Father hath put in his* A. 1. 7.
own Power. Certainly the Curiosity of some
men in late days deserve rebuke with
them of old, who said, *Lord, wilt thou* Ver. 6.
at

at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?—To whom the Lord answered, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, &c.* It is (as if he should say) reserved for some in after times: but I refer not here to the Day nor Year of Christs personal coming, but to the beginning of Christs Kingdom, upon the founding of the seventh Trumpet.

IV. Christ may seem to tarry out of pity and Compassion to poor sinners, his Elect must be all called or brought in; he is not willing that any of them should perish, nor can they perish; therefore he for their sakes seems to tarry, for many of them amongst the Gentiles shall not be called, nor can they have the Gospel preached to them, until *Babylon* is overthrown: For then will be the time, when Multitudes in many Nations and dark Regions of the Earth shall flow in to Jesus Christ, then, and not till then shall the fulness of the Gentiles come in, and until that is done, Blindness will remain upon the poor Jews, as *Paul* clearly sheweth; but then they shall be that Nation, that God hath foretold shall be born at once; *And so all Israel shall be saved: And this brings me to the next Reason.*

V. Because all things which God hath spoken in his holy Word, (as antecedent to his coming) must be accomplished. (1.) The Image Power must be utterly broken into pieces, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. (2.) And to this end the stone must smite the Image upon the feet, which I daily wait to see. (3.) The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all the World, and then cometh the End; but not until then. (4.) The little stone must become a great mountain, and fill the whole Earth. (5.) Whether the Jews shall be called before the coming of Christ, or not, is a doubt to some, but none to me; because when Christ comes his Bride is compleatly ready, not one Member of Christs Mystical Body shall be wanting.

VI. Therefore he seems to tarry, that all his Elect may be brought home. The Bride must have her full time allowed her in order to be ready; shall Christ be married to an imperfect Bride? There shall not, my Brethren, be one Member of his Mystical Body in that day wanting or uncalled, or not actually united to the glorious Head. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Honour to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready. It may be also in Mercy to them who are already called, that they may be in an actual fitness for his coming, and also to try their Faith and Patience.

VII. It may be that so the Harvest and Vintage of the Earth may be fully ripe; Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. The Children of Israel could not possess the land of Canaan, until the sins of the Amorites were fully ripe. Moreover, By Christs tarrying and offering to the World so long a time, thro' the exercise of his Patience, he will leave the World without Excuse; for God came not upon the Old World, before he gave Warning; nor will he come to destroy this present World by Fire, without giving them sufficient Warning of it.

VIII. And lastly, Our Lord may seem to tarry, to put all men, especially his own People, upon a constant and continual Watch: *What I say to one, I say unto all, Watch.* We have time given us to get upon our Watch Tower, and enquire *What of the Night?*

APPLICATION.

Sinners, Take heed you are not found amongst the Scoffers that the Apostle speaks of; *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days Scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the Promise of his coming, for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation.* Beware of harbouring any Atheistical or unbelieving Thoughts, and of growing bold in wickedness, because Christ seems to tarry or defer his coming, it is you hear, for holy and wise ends: The Old World would not believe what *Noah* told them, but were fearless of any such flood; They builded, planted, married, and were given in Marriage, until the flood came and took them all away. They found the Word of God spoken by his Servant was true, tho' it was deferred an hundred and twenty years, tho' they believed him not, but reproached him. Many it may be believe not, (because they see all things remain as they were from the Beginning) hence think that Christ will never come, and so this World never have an end; and the World to come never begin, but it will not be long before they will see themselves deceived.

2. What a dismal state will they be in, who are found not ready when the Lord Jesus cometh, better they had never been born. O look out, what signs have we of the last days upon us; how are many eating and drinking, and smitting their fellow servants? Such who pretend they are Christs Servants, his Ministers, and yet live in abominable course of Wickedness, and have been, (and long again to be) Persecutors of their fellow Servants, and say in their Hears, The Lord delays his coming:

coming: How many gluttonous and drunken, and whoring Preachers are in these dayes?

But to proceed.

They all slumbered and slept.

What
meant by
the Virgins
slumbering
and sleep-
ing.

This slumbering and sleeping I shewed you is not the sleep of Death: By *slumbering*, &c. therefore I understand is meant a want of that due watchfulness which is required in all the Disciples of Jesus Christ; they all fall into a drowsie and secure frame of spirit: — To slumber is when a man is drowsie and ready to take a nap (as we commonly say.) But sleep is a binding up the senses; but pray note, the wise Virgins do never so sleep, but their Hearts are awake, they therefore sleep not as others do.

Doct. *The wise Virgins as well as the foolish are subject or liable to spiritual slumber and sleep: Or, The Saints may fall into a slumbering state.*

1. *I shall shew from whence this cometh to pass.*

2. *Shew you the Signs of a sleepy frame of heart.*

3. *Discover the danger that attends such a State and Condition.*

What cau-
seth the
Virgins to
sleep and
slumber.

Mat. 26. 41

1. Sleep or spiritual drowsiness riseth from those gross Vapours which seize on and clog the Soul; I mean inbred Corruption, or that body of sin and death; as gross vapours in the body inclines to natural sleep: *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* The Spirit sanctified by divine Grace stirs up to constancy in Duty, but the Flesh the sensitive part is apt and prone to temptation and remissness, and is soon weary; and this part is too apt to over-power the Soul in its spiritual activity and liveliness; besides, Satan hath great influences upon the fleshly part.

Prov. 19.
15.

2. *Slothfulness*, or a careless and dull frame, hath a great tendency to produce sleep, as Solomon saith, *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.* When a man refuseth to labour or is idle, gross vapours gather and becloud the senses, and hold us as Prisoners for a while; and so it is with the Soul, when a Christian is idle or of a slothful disposition, the spiritual senses are soon darkened or beclouded, and the Soul (for some time) is as it were a prisoner.

3. *Wearisomness*: Solomon saith, *the sleep of a labouring man is sweet*; that is, when he is tyred out or weary at his work: Some Christians are too apt to be weary and to faint in their Minds, especially when they see little comes in, while they labour, they hear, read and pray, but profit little, gather hardly any strength or

Comfort, and so are ready to faint and be weary, and to drop asleep or fall into a drowsie and indifferent frame of Heart.

4. *A dark and cloudy day*, (we find by experience) is very ready to put us into a drowsie frame; so a dark time or dispensation of Gods Providence under which we may be exercised, is very apt to cause us to fall into spiritual drowsiness, if not to fall asleep; we may perceive this is so in the Case of the Disciples of our Lord, upon his Crucifixion; 'twas in such a dark and cloudy day that they were ready all to fall asleep: And from hence one said *I go a fishing*, they were ready to give up all their hope, and cease being Fishers of Men any more, but thought to go to their old Trade.

5. *An apprehension that it is a great while to day*: Tho a man waits for the Morning, yet if he thinks it is not Midnight, he lays himself down again to sleep; so a Christian that apprehends it will be a great while before Christ will come, or Death will come, tends to cause sleep, or inclines him to give way to slumber thro the temptations of Satan: What need I (saith he) to be so much concerned? my state is good, and I shall have time enough to set in order what is yet wanting, and provide for the coming of Jesus Christ; such that apprehend the Night almost gone, and the Day approacheth, ought to rise and look out, but I perceive no such thing, I may have many days on Earth, and it will be hard to hold the pace I have hitherto run, I may slack or abate a little in that heat and zeal I have shewed.

VI. Moreover when a man apprehends no danger, or hath no fear seizing on him of approaching evil, when he is in bed, or inclined to drowsiness, he from thence is apt to give way to it, he fears no thieves breaking in upon him, nor hears of no cry of fire, nor of amazing Providences: Thus many poor Christians seem secure, and are not sensible they are both beset with thieves, nor perceive the danger and dismal hour they are in, tho some talk of amazing Judgments and Providences very near, but they see no cause to believe or fear any such things, and so give way to a slothful and sleepy frame of spirit, pursuing the World, and loving their ease. *Jacobs* sleep departed from him for fear his Sheep should come to harm, Gen. 31. 40. Some men know not what rich Treasure they are entrusted with, and so fear not the Enemy of their Souls.

VII. *Some distempers or diseases which seize upon the Body*, causeth an unusual Sleepiness, so that all the Means made use of

of, can hardly prevent the sleeping and dozing of such persons.

So, my Brethren, a spiritual *Lethargy*, a cold earthly distemper, seizeth on too many Professors, by which means their spiritual senses seem much gone, and excessive drowsiness overtaketh them to such a degree, that nothing can awaken them; no, neither the Word of God, the Reproofs of his Ministers, the threatening Judgments that draw near, nor the secret Rebukes and checks of their own Consciences, tho they may perceive their Love to Christ, to Religion, to the Church, to Ministers, and to the People of God, is much abated.

VIII. *Surfetting and Drunkenness causeth Immoderate Sleep*; or an excessive use of the Creature. What a sleepy frame was Lot in by means of drinking too much Wine, and how sad was the Effects of it! Our Lord intimates that by surfetting and drunkenness, many Professors in the last days would fall asleep, and put the day of his coming afar off: Some are drunk with Riches, others with earthly Pleasures, and others with Errors, and so are giddy-headed, and by such means drop asleep: *They stagger, but not with strong drink*; God hath left them to delusions, and poured upon them the spirit of deep sleep. How doth our Saviour give us warning against all Excesses: *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfetting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

Mat. 24. 47
Luk. 12. 45

Isa. 29. 9,
10.

Luk. 21. 34

IX. Experience shews, that a sleepy Company a man may be among, tends to cause him to fall asleep also: So loose, carnal and sleepy Professors, with whom a lively Christian may walk, and daily converse with, is too subject to have ill effects upon him: *With the froward we learn frowardness.*

X. Long watching tends to produce inordinate Sleeping. These Virgins had watched long, looking and waiting for the Bridegroom, but he tarrying, or not coming when they expected he would, they all fell asleep, or into a slumbering frame of Heart, to which I might add, the withdrawing of the quickning Influences of the holy Spirit; if the Spirit be grieved, and with-holds his quickening Operations, how soon do poor Christians fall asleep!

Secondly, *I shall give you some Signs of a sleepy and slumbering frame of Heart.*

The Signs
of a sleepy
frame of
spirit.

1. *When a man can't hear* tho one calls aloud unto him, it may be a Sign he is asleep.

So when a Christian cannot hear the Voice of the Word, or not discern Gods Voice, or that it is Christ that calls him, it may be a Sign that he is asleep, or in a sleepy frame. Thus it was with Samuel; *Samuel was laid down to sleep, and the Lord called, Samuel, — and he ran to Eli, and said, Here am I:* The Lord called him again, but he knew not that it was the Lord that called him. So many do not know or discern the Voice of God (when they hear the Word) from the voice of the poor Minister; certainly such who hear the Word as if it was only the Word of man, and not the Word of God, are asleep; or if they cannot discern the Word is spoken to them, but rather think it concerns such or such persons, and that they are not concerned in it, it may be a sign they are in a sleepy, or in an unsensible frame of Heart. Or if they cannot hear the Voice of the Spirit, nor of their own Consciences, nor the Voice that is in the Rod, slumber hath taken hold of them.

2. *Dreaming is a sign a Person is asleep.* Some weep in their sleep, who have cause to rejoyce, and others laugh, who have cause (perhaps) to cry; and some dream they eat, and dream they drink, when 'tis no such thing. So many Professors think their State is very good, but alas they are asleep, and do but dream: Some mourn and are ready to conclude that their Condition is very bad, when it may be very good, they do but dream, it is a sign they are in a sleepy or unsensible condition. Also others doubt not but that they are Believers, they presume Christ is theirs, having great Confidence, and doubt not, sin troubles them not, they ask not for Pardon, but it is but a dream: *He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully, what is the Chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord.* The Doctrine some preach, and others believe, is but a Dream, and none of the Word of God: It is as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but when he waketh, his soul is empty, &c.

3. Men who are asleep neither know their State nor dangers, but are secure in a Storm, as Jonas who was fallen asleep when the Ship was ready to sink to the bottom: So such Professors who know not their present State and Condition, know not whether Christ be theirs or not, or that Christ is in them or not, or whether they are true Believers or not, certainly are asleep, or unsensible; perhaps they are ready to drop down to Hell, but doubt not but they are true Believers; the foolish Virgins who fell asleep, knew not the danger they were in.

4. Such that are asleep know not what is done to them, as Adam when he was in

in

in that deep sleep, as also *Sampson* when he was asleep: Many Professors know not what God is doing in them, for them, with them, nor against them in the way of his Providences, this argues they are asleep.

5. A person that is asleep forgets his Business, or the work he was about, or ought to be exercised in: So a secure Professor, or one spiritually asleep forgets the Lord, his works, his will, and what he ought to do also. Take a Believer awake, and then he can remember the Lord his Covenant and his Works, and what it is the Lord commands him to do.

6. A Person asleep fears no evil, until it comes upon him: So a sleepy Professor foresees no evil, fears no Danger, like the Old World in the days of *Noah*, and the People of *Sodom*, until the Flood came upon the one, and Fire and Brimstone from Heaven upon the other. *Job* speaks of some that *their Houses are free from Fear*.

7. In sleep the Senses are not exercised, the Eye sees not, the Ear hears not, the Mouth tasteth not: So a Person Spiritually asleep is very unsensible, his Spiritual Senses are stupified, and motion also ceaseth.

But Spiritual Slumber greatly differs from deep Sleep.

1. Hypocrites are asleep, but a true Christian tho he is said to sleep, yet it is but a slumber comparatively to the sleeping of the other; many true Christians may lose the Sense of Gods Love, yet they dread to sin against him.

2. A wicked man lays himself down to sleep, but tho a true Christian sleeps and slumbers, yet he strives against it, he loves not sleep, tho it overcomes him, yet he strives to shake off his drowsy frame.

3. A true Believer is soon awakened, that means will awaken him, that will not, cannot awaken a wicked man; for nothing less than almighty Power can do it, (for they sleep the Sleep of Death:) indeed the foolish Virgins were never thoroughly awakened, but only so far as to be convinced that their state was bad, and that their Lamps were gone out.

4. Such that are in a deep sleep, all their Senses are bound up, or they are utterly unsensible; and thus 'tis with Hypocrites and wicked men, their Hearts are asleep; but as I said, (and as the *Spouse* said) tho a true Believer sleeps, yet his Heart is awake.

5. Slumbering denotes an indisposition of the Soul, or a short cessation of Action: A godly Man may be under Deadness, and omit his Duty for a short time, thro' the weakness of the flesh, and Satans Temptations; but an Hypocrite is utterly

destitute of any Principle of Activity, to perform any true Spiritual Acts of Obedience unto God.

But to proceed.

Thirdly, *I shall shew you the Danger of a sleepy state, or frame of Heart.*

1. Such cannot see how to escape Danger, or are out of a present Capacity to prevent the Evils that may be near or just coming upon them.

2. They that are asleep lie open to the Enemy; a weak person may destroy a strong man: A great Champion, when he is asleep, as *Jael* slew *Sisera* when he was asleep, by driving a nail thro' his Temples. O then what need have we to keep our selves awake, who have powerful Enemies, that watch an Opportunity to destroy us. We may soon lose our strength, (tho not our Lives) as *Sampson* did, if we once fall asleep.

3. Our sleeping time is that Season Satan waits for, for if he can but catch us napping, he will fall upon us and wound us be sure: It is well he can't murder our Souls, it is not whom he would, but whom he may, that he devours.

4. It was while men slept the Devil sowed the evil Seed; great part of the wrong and mischief the Churches and our Souls sustain, is by means of our giving too much way to sleeping and slumbering.

5. Our Danger is very great by means of our slumbering, by Reason Satan never sleeps, he is always awake, and is a very vigilant Enemy; nay, and know also, this World is full of Devils, who go to and fro to see who they can find off of their watch.

6. Such that are in a sleepy and slumbering Condition are in Danger to be sore amazed and dreadfully affrighted, when awakened, by a sudden Outcry; *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*. How was the *Jaylor* amazed, when by an *Earthquake* he was awakened out of sleep; and so the foolish Virgins at the Midnight Cry will be greatly terrified.

7. They that sleep in Harvest, lose their gathering time; and so are in danger of losing their Souls for ever, besides the day of death, or the day of Christs coming will come upon them unawares.

APPLICATION.

I. Let us bewail and lament over the present Generation of Professors, and mourn over our selves. O into what a drowsie and sleepy Age are we fallen! are not all the Virgins now asleep, or in a slumbering frame of Heart, and yet know not but the Midnight Cry is very near.

H h h h h

near.

The difference between the sleeping of a Hypocrite and a true Christian.

Jud. 4.21.

Job. 21.9.

Lament.

near. Remember Christs Words, *What can ye not watch with me one hour?*

Inform.

II. Yet this may inform us of the vast difference there is between the sleeping of the wise and foolish Virgins.

1. The wise sleep and slumber in a good state, they are converted Persons, they have Oyl in their vessels, tho their Lamps want trimming; but the foolish sleep in a fearful state, they have no Grace, no Oyl in their vessels.

2. The wise made good use of their time, the proper Season to provide themselves; but the foolish will not seek Oyl until it is too late.

3. The wise thro' Satans Temptations fell into a sleepy and slumbering frame, but their great work was done; but the foolish fell asleep before any of their work was begun.

4. The sleeping of the wise is dishonourable unto Christ, and hurtful to themselves, it is to the wounding of their Souls; but the sleeping of the foolish will be to the utter and eternal undoing of their Souls.

Exhort.

III. *Exhort.* O be exhorted to arouse, let us cast off sleep from our eyes; you that are Believers, awake.—For

MOTIVES.

1. Consider, what Pains God took to awake you and I out of our former Sleep, that Sleep of Spiritual Death! Did he not send his Son from Heaven to awaken us, and sent his Word and Spirit to this end also! was it not the Effects of infinite Love, Wisdom and Power! O let us then strive to be in a wakeful frame.

2. Our Enemy is upon us, as it was said to *Sampson*, so it may be said to every one of us.

3. Consider, Jesus Christ is come to visit us, to feed and feast us: Lo he is now at our doors and knocks, and shall any of us say, *I sleep*, as the *Spouse* did, so may he withdraw and be gone, and we may (perhaps) seek him, but find him not.

¹ *Theff. 5.*
^{7.}

4. You are the Children of the Day: *They that sleep, sleep in the night.* You profess yourselves to be awake, and freed from the gross Ignorance of the Children of Darkness; you see the evil of the inordinate love of this World, and are you overcome with Surfetting and Drunkenness, and with the Cares of this life?

^{Luk. 21.}
^{36.}

5. What great things do we look for? is not the Thoughts of this enough to stir us up to Watchfulness? And are we not also bid to watch and pray always, that we may escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

6. Consider, how many will be found

asleep, and unprepared when the Lord comes; nay, how many foolish Virgins there will be in those latter days, who fall asleep without Oyl in their Lamps, and whose Lamps also go out.

IV. *Admirat.* Let us wonder at the *Admirat.* Patience, Forbearance, and long suffering of God! O how good and gracious is he in that he comes not forth in his Wrath, to take Vengeance upon sinners, tho he is, and hath been so long provoked! See what sparing Mercy he shews to the World for his Elects sake! had he not left us a very small remnant, we had been made as *Sodom*, before this day; there are also many yet not called, but when once all his *Ista. 1.9.* Elect are brought in, he will stay not one moment longer.

V. It may be of use also by way of *Can-Caution.* *tion*, the Bridegroom seems to tarry after the time some have spoken of, for doing his great and wonderful Works; let none *prefix* times any more, till the vision speaks more plainly, since all that have presumed so to do, have been mistaken, the time of the *End of the Wonders* is not fully known, the time is set, but perhaps not yet revealed to any; tho' it is no doubt very near, and God may give to some more light into those things, than many others have at present; and let none condemn those who search into the sacred Oracles, and say, *When will be the end of the Wonders?* For this very thing was prophesied of, (*i.e.*) that one Saint shall thus say unto another Saint, but the Words are closed up and sealed till the *Dan. 12.* time of the end.

VI. We may take an Encouragement *Incourag.* in this, Christ will come, believe this, doubt not of this; *Behold I come quick-* *Rev. 22.12* *ly, &c.* he comes, he comes, and that too suddenly, and will surprize the World, but that day shall not come upon Believers as a Thief, a blessed day it will be to them.

VII. *Terror*; But Wo to the wicked, *Terror.* to all Hypocrites and Unbelievers, for he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance ² *Theff. 1.* on all that know not God, and who obey ^{8.} not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. And Wo to such that say in their Hearts, ^{Mat. 24.48} The Lord delays his coming, he will cut them in sunder, and appoint them their portion with Hypocrites, and Unbelievers, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

VIII. Let us all make Provision for Christs coming.

1. Get Oyl in your vessels; let us see *Directions.* we have sincere Love to Jesus Christ.

2. Let

2. Let us trim our Lamps, and awake out of sleep to do this.

3. Let our Lights be clearly burning.

4. Every one be full of great Expectation.

5. And beware of the evils of these latter days, in which dangerous Principles and corrupt Practices do abound; and many having their Hearts set inordinately upon the things of the World.

SERMON XXI.

Mat. XXV. 6.

And at midnight there was a cry made, behold the Bridegroom cometh,—go ye out to meet him.

IN these Words we have these several Parts.

1. An Act done, *There was a cry made.*

2. The matter of the cry, *The Bridegroom cometh.*

3. The time when, *viz. at midnight.*

4. Attendance and Notice required, *Behold, &c.*

Take Notice of it, it is matter of the highest moment.

5. Counsel, or a Call, *Go ye out to meet him.*

6. The Subjects required thus to go forth, [*Ye*] ye wise and foolish virgins, or all that make a Profession of the Gospel.

Doct. That a little before Christs second coming, notice will be given of it, or there shall be an alarm of his near Approaching or glorious Appearance.

In speaking to this Proposition, I shall

1. By way of Premise lay down two or three explanatory propositions.

2. Shew what may be meant by this cry, and what a kind of cry it will be.

3. Why Christ will give warning of his coming.

4. Shew why called a Midnight cry.

Explanatory propositions.

Propos. 1. That though Christ by his Word gives warning, and shews fully that he will come again the second time, yet he will some other way alarm his People, or give notice of his near approaching: *Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man.*

Propos. 2. That there will be some short Distance of time between the Midnight Cry, and our Lords visible personal Appearance. And this Cry is the Har-

binger or Forerunner of his coming, to give warning to the Virgins to trim their Lamps, and to be ready.

Propos. 3. That this Cry will awaken all, both the wise and the foolish, or sincere Christians and Hypocrites.

Secondly, *Shew what may be meant by this Cry.*

1. It may (as I conceive) refer to some mighty impression upon the Hearts of all Professors, especially upon the Spirits of faithful Ministers, of Christs sudden coming; for who are capable at midnight to make a Cry, or give warning, but the Watchmen? Ministers are called Watchmen: *Son of man, I have made thee a Watchman— if therefore thou givest warning, &c.— I have set Watchman upon the Walls of Jerusalem.* And these Watchmen tell what time of the Night it is: *Watchman what of the night? Watchman what of the night? &c.* Ezek. 3. 17. Isa. 62. 6. Isa. 21. 11.

2. Possibly it may be some amazing Dispensation of Gods Providence to rouse all secure Professors. Perhaps the Earthquake mentioned *Rev. 11.* It will doubtless be some remarkable Event, that precedes the coming of our Lord.

3. May be it will be that Providence that makes way for the fall of Babylon, and the universal preaching of the Gospel: I presume none yet know directly what it will be.

Thirdly, *Why will Christ give warning of his coming in some remarkable manner?*

I. Because of the sublime Majesty and Glory of his Person: shall an earthly King notify his near approaching or coming to his People from the Awfulness of his Person; and shall not Jesus Christ do it much more? The Appearance of our Lord will be most glorious; and therefore long warning is given of it in the Word and by his Ministers, but at last more Loud warning, signified by a cry.

II. Because such wonderful things depend, as the Effects of his coming the second time; it is Matter, my Brethren, of the highest Moment or Concernment.

1. As the raising of the Dead, for just at his personal Appearance, all that sleep in Jesus shall be raised, and all believers that are alive, shall be changed in a moment, or twinkling of an eye, and their bodies shall be fashioned like unto Christs Glorious Body. Phil. 3. 21.

2. The passing away, dissolving or burning up the Heavens and the Earth that now are, for this will be one of the Effects of his coming; but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent

fervent heat, and the earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up.

3. The utter and final Overthrow of Satans Kingdom, and the setting and Establishment of the Kingdom of our Lord in its highest Glory.

Rev. 22.
11.

4. The final Cessation of the Ministration of the Gospel, or Offers and Means of Grace to the World; then it will be said, let him that is *filthy be filthy still, and he that is holy, be holy still*. Such that are filthy and unjust shall ever so remain, and they that are righteous shall arrive to no further Degree of inherent Holiness.

5. The glorious Manifestation of the Children of God, and the Celebration of the Marriage of the Lamb—and many other amazing things.

III. Jesus Christ will give Warning by such a Cry, because of that slumbring and sleepy state of the Virgins just before, but this Cry will awaken them with a Witness, it may be the voice of some *Boanerges*, or a son of Thunder.

IV. To leave all formal and hypocritical Professors without excuse; for should not the Lord give warning a little time before his coming, (since just at his Appearance he will come as a thief very suddenly) the wicked might pretend that he dealt severely with them, they having not had warning of his coming, and it may be that his own Elect ones may be every ways actually fitted and prepared for that day.

Fourthly, *Why it is called a Midnight Cry.*

1. It may be so called, because *Midnight* is a time of great Darkness: So this Cry will be in such an hour when the People will be in a Cloud of thick Darkness, and not know what time of the night it is, until they hear this Cry.

2. Midnight is a time when all generally are asleep, and very secure, and perhaps it may be called the *Midnight Cry*, because just at that time all the People of God will be in a secure state, or almost all asleep.

3. Because at Midnight every thing seems to be still, and no Noise in the Street, neither doth fear possess the minds of People, they are in their Beds, and seem to take their quiet Repose: So at the time when this Cry will be, the Generality of Professors and others also will seem to be still, and as such who have laid down themselves to take their Repose apprehending no approaching Danger, but little talk of Christs coming; some time before he might be much expected and discoursed of, but at this time

when this Cry will be heard, 'tis not hardly thought of.

5. It may be called the *Midnight Cry* in respect of the Effects of it, for like as a dismal Cry at Midnight is very amazing, People being (as it were) frightened out of their sleep; so this Cry will have much like Effects upon the sleepy Virgins.

6. Christ may call it a Cry at *Midnight*, to excite and stir us all up to watch, and not to sleep or be secure in a night of Darkness, or in a dark and gloomy Season.

APPLICATION.

1. See the great Love and Goodness of God to his Saints, he will awaken them, that they may prepare themselves, and be ready for Christs coming.

2. This may teach us who live in these latter days, to take heed that we fall not asleep, and to consider how much better it is to be awakened (if we are fallen into a drowsy Frame) by a sweet still voice, than to stay till the *Midnight Cry* is heard; for is it not terrible to be awakened with the Cry of *Fire, Fire, Fire*? O what Tremblings of Heart doth attend such a Cry in the street at midnight!

3. Consider also how near this Cry may be, nay, is it not begun already? tho it will rise higher, or be much louder; for no doubt but it will be a very loud Cry, in as much as it does awaken the very foolish Virgins, who no doubt will be fast asleep till then, and also it will be an amazing Cry, tho to wise and sincere Professors a very gracious and merciful Cry.

4. When you hear at any time a Cry at Midnight, think of this Cry, and enquire also what time of the Night it is now; I mean, observe well the signs of the times.

5. This no doubt is that time, when the *sinners in Sion will be afraid, and fearfulness surprize the Heart of the Hypocrite*, fear then will seize them.

Go ye out to meet him.

Note from hence, that the Design of God in causing this Cry, is to call Professors up to prepare to meet the Bridegroom.

Then all those Virgins arose, and trimmed their Lamps.

Observe, that as these Words shew they had been all asleep, so it shews that they were not awakened until this Cry was heard; but this voice will quicken them. Believers may be drowsy, and their Faith may be low, and their love be much decayed,

cayed, and their Lights burn also very dim, and ready to go out: O how apt and liable are the Saints to lose their life, strength and vigour, or that heat of Zeal which sometime they had.

Note also, a Child of God may have his Lamp to trim, when he hath the greatest need of it; or that he may be under the greatest decay, when he should have obtained the greatest growth in Grace, in Faith and Holiness; he may have Faith, but it is weak, and not in exercise, or tho he believes, yet he may not have the Joy of Faith. — Moreover observe, that tho Believers Lamps may want trimming, yet they are not gone out, they do burn tho they give not a clear light.

Quest. What is meant by trimming of their Lamps?

What is meant by trimming their lamps. Marcot. p. 2:7.

Ans. It may signifie their supplying their Lamps with Oyl; this Expositors conclude is one thing which is hereby intended. 'In Trimming the Lamp (saith 'one) there is usually a supply of Oyl, 'if it want it, as when it hath burned 'long it must be supplied, the Oyl being 'spent it will not live except it be supplied. So the wise Virgins trimming their Lamps, is their fetching more grace by fresh acts of Faith in Jesus Christ, they go by Faith and Prayer to that fullness of Grace that is in Jesus Christ, perceiving their Oyl almost all spent.

2. It may also denote the stirring up of the Grace which remaineth in their Lamps: Stir up the gift that is in thee, &c. that so their Conversation may shine in Grace and Holiness.

3. The trimming the Lamp is also the raising the Wick it being burned low. A poor Believer may be in such a declining Condition, that his graces and spirit also may be low, and therefore must be raised by a more lively exercise of Faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Moreover the trimming of the Lamp denotes the cleansing of it, and the taking off the dead ashes that hinders the Light, or prevents its burning so clearly as otherwise it would. Now what is this, but the putting away of all Iniquity by Faith and unfeigned Repentance: Our Conversation or Lamp of Profession is subject to gather filth, and the dead ashes of Corruption hinders oft-times the shinings of our Lives, to the glory of God. Unbelief, deadness, earthliness, and self-confidence is like to a Thief in the Candle, or dead ashes in the Wick of a Lamp, and therefore must be snuffed by Mortification, least the Spirit of God be grieved and depart from us, as to his quickening and comforting Influences.

APPLICATION.

Let these things, this Cry, stir us all up to this Duty, i. e. to trim our Lamps: Are not we in a slumbering frame of heart, and do not our Lamps need trimming? Besides, is not the Bridegroom ready to appear?

MOTIVES.

1. Consider, tho the Midnight Cry may not yet be heard, yet God uses means to awaken you, he hath stirred me up to cry unto you, and call aloud to you to this end: O pray that God would restore your Souls, quicken you in his Psal. 23.3. wayes.

2. Consider, that untill our Lamps are better trimmed they will not burn clear, that others may see our good works, and glorifie our Father which is in Heaven.

3. Untill then we may not enjoy the Light of Joy, Peace and Comfort in our own Soules, nor be of that use and benefit unto others, nor beautifie our holy profession.

4. Untill then we shall not be fit nor be prepared for death, nor for the coming of the Lord. Besides, the Night is far spent, and the Day is at hand, therefore we should cast off all the unfruitfull Rom. 13. works of darkness, and put on the Armour 12. of light. But I shall proceed to another Proposition.

Doct. That tho a sincere Christian may fall into a sleepy frame of heart, yet he shall awake, and shall not sleep the sleep of Death: or, The day of Christ shall not find them asleep. I shall

1. Premise one or two things touching the Happiness of a true Believers state, tho in a sleepy frame.

2. Shew from whence it is (or comes to pass) that he shall awake.

A true Believers state is always good and safe. A believer is always in a good state, tho he may be in an ill frame.

1. Because he is a Child of God, a Son of God, and he cannot lose that relation, and from hence an Heir of Heaven. If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ. Rom. 8.17.

2. A true Believer (it follows from hence) is always in a state of Union with Christ, tho he may not know it, and the bonds of this Union cannot be broke, it is an indissoluble Union.

3. He is ever in a justified state, and all his sins (as to vindictive Justice) are forgiven for ever, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8.1.

sus; them that he justifies he also glorifies.

No true Believer can finally and totally fall away; tho the foolish Virgins sleep and finally perish, yet the wise, whatsoever sleep or slumber they fall into, yet can never perish.

Yet Believers may fall foully, and lose the sense of Gods Love, and be deserted, and be almost ready utterly to despair and give up their Hope. For thus it was with *Heman*; also *Job* saith, that his Hope was perished; a godly man, my Brethren, may sin away his Joy, Peace and Comfort, and all lively acts of Faith may cease.

He may also for a short time thro Satans temptations falter in his Profession, and neglect his Duty, so that his Lamp may grow very dim, or hardly burn at all.

Nay, and when Christ comes to give them a gracious Visit, they may be (as the Spouse was) asleep: *I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse; but what an ill frame was she in! I sleep but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my Sister, my Spouse, &c.* Nay, and gracious persons may let Christ wait long before they arise to open to him. *For my head is wet with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night.* Christ waits long, knocks hard, and calls aloud at their door, and yet they arise not, no not untill he is withdrawn and is gone. *I rose to open to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone, I sought him, but I found him not.*

They may moreover sleep and not awake, untill some amazing Providence comes upon them, which is here signified by the *Midnight Cry*.

Secondly, I shall shew you from whence it is, or cometh to pass, that believers may, and sometimes do, fall into such a sleepy frame.

From whence it comes to pass that Believers fall into a sleepy frame.

Cant. 5. 3.

1. Certainly, it riseth from that corrupt part that is in them; I mean the body of sin.

2. From Satans Temptations. *I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

They perceive their State is good, and their work is done, and so the Devil gets advantages against them, to neglect their indispensable Duties.

3. It may also be occasioned by means of the Snares and Allurements of this World. O how ready are we to have our

hearts too much run out to earthly things. *All seek their own, not the things that are of Jesus Christs.*

4. It may likewise come upon them (as you heard) thro the Bridegrooms tarrying, or by reason of their long watching; but having spoken to this already, I shall say no more to it now.

Thirdly, Why shall true Believers awake out of their sleepy and slumbring frame?

Ans. 1. Because they have a Principle of spiritual Life in them; whilst Life is in a man, tho he be asleep, there is ground enough to believe he will awake; but if a man falls asleep and his Life is gone, there is no hope of his being awakened. The Spirit of God remains in Believers for ever, they have a principle of eternal life in them.

2. Because the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day; tho their Path may sometime seem dark, yet that darkness shall vanquish: *His leaf shall not wither; — He shall be green, and flourishing in his Profession; tho it may seem to fade for a short time.*

3. Because of the nature of that Union they have with Jesus Christ; *Because I live, ye shall live also.* — Union with Christ is as a Spring that feeds or fills their Vessels and Lamps with fresh Oyl, as the Branches receive Sap from the Root, by which means they grow, flourish, and bring forth Fruit.

4. Because of that great Love of God to them; the Love God hath to them, will not suffer them to sleep long before he in a gracious manner awakens them: Besides, his promise is, that he will return again and revive them; *They shall revive as the Corn.* — *He will revive the hearts of the humble, and the spirits of the contrite ones.* Such that we love, we will not suffer to sleep in a dangerous hour, to their utter ruine, if we can wake them; now the Love of God to his Saints, exceeds our Love to any dear Friend, and he is able to awaken and quicken his People.

5. Because their Head never sleeps; *He that keepeth Israel doth neither sleep nor slumber.* In this consisteth the safety of Believers, and from hence the Soul shall be awakened both from a dead frame in respect of spirits and their bodys also at the last day.

APPLICATION.

1. This discovers the great difference that there is between the state of the wise and foolish Virgins.

2. Let Believers be exhorted to holy Watchfulness.

1. Be-

1. Because otherwise the Word of God and the means of Grace may be ineffectual to you, and you may lose much sweet Comfort by Christs gracious Visits, and be brought under many fears and doubts about your state.

2. Tho your State is good, yet you may not be actually ready to meet the Bridegroom.

Jer. 2. 2. 3. Consider what love you had to Christ when you first believed. *I remember the love of thine Esponsals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, &c.* Nothing is more offensive and grievous to Jesus Christ, than to see his People cool in their Love to him. *Yet nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, &c. Take Heb. 10. 32 holy Pauls advice: *But call to remembrance the former days, in which after you were illuminated, you suffered a great fight of afflictions.*

4. Consider that Christs Love is ever the same, he never grows cold in his affections to his Spouse, and dear Saints, nor hath he given to us any cause to decline in our love to him: *Have I been a barren wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness?*

Take two or three Directions.

Directions 1. Strengthen that which remains that to a wake- is ready to dye; do not lose the little ful frame. Faith, Love, Zeal, and Resolution you have, but labour after an addition of every grace.

2. Be restless in your spirits untill you find Christ again, if he be withdrawn: Tell him you are sick of Love; let it appear that you are troubled and do mourn in his absence; thus it was with David; *Thou hidst thy face, and I was troubled;* labour after poverty of spirit.

3. Labour to die to the things of this Life; take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness, get loose in your Affections to all perishing things; beware of the Cares of the World and the deceitfulness of Riches; know ye not that ye are Pilgrims on Earth, and are travelling to another Countrey?

Luke 21. 36. 4. Be much in Prayer, and watch therein, pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Let us watch our Hearts, watch our Tongues, watch our Eyes, and watch our whole Conversation; our Lamps also must be watched, lest they grow dim, or Oil fails. *Let your loyns be girt, and your lamps burning.* Strive to be much in secret Prayer, Closet Prayer, and see how your Hearts are affected to that.

5. Think much upon another World, contemplate on Death, and on the Day of Judgment, and the coming of Christ: Consider how short and uncertain Life is,

our days are but as a shadow, or as a Vapour that flies away.

6. Improve all those Providences of God under which you are exercised; observe God in all his Dispensations, Satan in all his Temptations, and your own Hearts in all their Inclinations; strive to discern the Voice of God from the Voice of Satan, and know that God tries us for approbation, but Satan for our destruction; God sets our sins before us to humble us, but Satan to ruin us by slavish fear and unbelief.

7. Delight in the Company of the wise, and wakefull Christians, and avoid conversing or keeping company with loose and carnal Professors, much more with the prophane and ungodly, who contemn all Religion and Godliness.

8. Receive Reproof kindly, especially from your Minister, who is commanded to rebuke some (as Occasion may be) sharply. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall not break my head, saith David;* if you hate him that reproves in the gate, it is a sign your Hearts are not right with God; *Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.* Prov. 9. 8.

9. Look every day to your Lamps; the Lamps of the Sanctuary were to be dressed every day; — *He dressed them, and made them ready every morning.* Exod. 30. The care of trimming our Lamps, must be our business Morning and Evening.

10. Take heed ye do not grieve the holy Spirit by flighting his Motions, nor by undervaluing his Work and Operations, (which I fear they do, who affirm the state of the Elect is as good before Grace, before effectual Calling as after,) do not grieve the Spirit by adhering to Satan, and by siding in with unbelieving thoughts, nor by yielding to any sin, nor by ascribing that to your selves which belongs to the blessed Spirit.

Then all those Virgins arose, &c.

Quest. What is meant by the foolish Virgins arising, and trimming their Lamps?

Ans. Their arising denotes, that they were more apprehensive of their danger than they were before; they were not altogether so senseless as formerly they were; also it may signifie that they reformed their Lives, and became more seemingly devout and pious, and were oftener in their Duties; may be now they pray, and hear the Word with greater diligence; their Consciences being awakened: Note from hence,

Doct. An awakened Conscience will put wicked men and Hypocrites upon doing somewhat in reforming their ways.

But

But alas, they think by this means to get into a good state, as well as into a good frame.

The foolish Virgins do it, to get a title to Heaven, the wise to get a meetness for Heaven; the foolish think by Repentance and Reformation of Life to be saved.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your Oyl, for our Lamps are gone out, vers. 8.

Observe,

Doct. Foolish Virgins, or Hypocrites may see their Want of Grace.

Quest. From whence is it that Hypocrites may see the want of Grace?

Ans. Their Sense of want of Grace ariseth from the inward Horror of their Heart, or Sight and Sence of their woful Condition; 'tis not from the Sence of the evil of sin, but of the Misery which they fear, is near.

2. It is not from the Sense of the Worth of Grace in it self, in respect of the sanctifying Vertue of it, but thinking thereby they may be saved; Hypocrites may desire Grace as a Bridge to carry them to Heaven, but 'tis not that they may glorifie God, and render the Name of Christ as sweet Odour; it is indeed for their own sakes, not from love to God, but love to themselves.

3. It is rather a passive Sense than an active Enquiry of their Hearts, when Distress and Want comes, Fools will see their Folly; like as some careless Traders, who cast not up their Books, but when Want and Poverty comes upon them, are perplexed; an Arrest of Conscience terrifies these foolish ones.

4. They see their wretched state, but not the sinfulness of their former neglect and remissness; it is a Natural Sence, not a Spiritual, Grace makes a man Spiritually poor, but they that never had it, cannot be affected for the simple want of it; 'tis only from the light of common Conventions, and not from saving Illuminations, it flows not from those shining Beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

5. It is from a Sence only of the want of Oyl in their Lamps, not for the want of it in their Vessels; they see the want of a holy Life, but not of Christ, and a changed Heart, they are more troubled for the guilt of sin than for the filth and pollution thereof; Oyl in the Lamp commends us to men, but Oyl in our Vessels, (i.e.) in our Hearts, commends us

to God. *David* wanted a new Heart; *Pl. 51. 5.* *Create in me a clean Heart;* and *Paul* cries out of the body of sin and death: an Hy-

pocrite may have an awakened Conscience, but not a renewed mind.

6. It is a Sence of the want of Oyl at last, nay, when it was too late, and now they mourn, as *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 5. 11, 12.* *And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body is consumed, and say How have I hated Instruction, and my Heart despised Reproof, and have not obeyed the Voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine Ear to them that instructed me; I was almost in all evil in the midst of the Congregation.* No doubt but *Esa* might at last see his folly in selling his Birthright for a Mess of Potage, but *Heb. 12. 16, 17.* he could not then obtain the blessing, tho he sought it with Tears.

Quest. From whence is it that the foolish Virgins came no sooner to see their Want and woful Condition?

1. Ans. They a long time deceived themselves. *Saul* held out pretty well until *Samuel* died, and may be thought his State good, but afterwards he saw God was departed from him: Self Love is a great Deceiver.

2. The good Opinion the wise Virgins had of them, might partly deceive them, the Approbation of godly Christians go a great way with some persons, they indeed prefer that above the Approbation of God.

3. It may be from the evil and depths of Deceit that is in their own Hearts; he that hath the quickest sight, the most piercing Eye, may not soon penetrate into the dark Corners of his own Heart: *Who (saith David) knows his Errors?* *Pl. 19. 12.*

4. They might see it no sooner from their great Remissness, in not searching and proving themselves. That which lies deep, or is hid, must be searched, this Wisdom the foolish Virgins wanted. A true Child of God thinks he can never thoroughly or sufficiently search his own Heart and Life, and therefore crys out, *Search me, O God, and know my Heart, try me and know my Thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me; tho he himself was not an idle searcher: I commended with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made a diligent search;* *Pl. 139. 22.* But this he saw was not sufficient, therefore desired the Lord also to search him, but this Wisdom the foolish Virgins had not.

4. No doubt it was also partly from the Subtilty of Satan, all the Devils Endeavours are to keep sinners ignorant of their Estate and Condition; one while he perswades the poor deluded wretch his state is good, but when he sees the sinners Eyes are a little opened, he perswades them 'tis too late, or there is no Cure, or else directs them to false and indirect ways to obtain it. And as the Devil strives

strives to keep an unsound Professor ignorant, that he may not be saved, so he endeavours to keep a sincere person ignorant of his Condition, that he may hinder him of the Joy of Salvation, or spoil all his Peace and Comfort.

6. It may arise from that Similitude or seeming Likeness there is between a form of Godliness and the Power thereof, or between Convictions of natural Conscience and true Evangelical Illuminations, or between true Faith and counterfeit Faith, and betwixt Reformation and Regeneration. *Similitude* (saith one) *is the Mother of Mistakes.* Bristol Stones seem like true Pearl, and Steel cut like Diamonds appear like true Diamonds. A Limner can draw very much like the Life, or him whose Face it represents.

7. It may be occasioned thro' the Ignorance and Blindness of some Teachers, whose Ministry they may some times attend to lead men out to rest upon a presumptuous Faith, and will not allow their Hearers to try themselves by signs or Characters of true Grace; such that discern all Evidences of Grace, or a reflex act of Faith to know how it is with them, I look upon to be Preachers of pernicious Doctrine; we can never be pressed too much to Sanctification, and to shew our Faith by our works.

8. Perhaps it may be a just and righteous Judgment of God upon them, that they see not their state no sooner, they are paid off in their own Coyn, since they deceived others, and were not willing to try themselves, God leaves them to Spiritual Blindness, and to the Deceit of their own Heart: *Jerusalem would not see the things that belonged to their peace; therefore our blessed Lord said, Now are they hid from your eyes.*

Luk. 19. 42

Quest. *Why are the foolish Virgins said to ask oyl of the wise?*

1. *Ans.* It may be partly to discover they are Fools; for who that are wise would go to men, to Saints, or to Ministers for Grace?

2. It may signify that Hypocrites in their Distress, know not what course to take, they catch hold of any thing, tho it be most unlikely to relieve them.

3. It may be to convince all that God will make it appear, that tho some seem to be wise and knowing Persons, and can perhaps dispute and argue excellently about Principles of Religion, yet at last that they are meer Fools; is he not a great Fool that will go to his fellow Creature for the true Grace of God? or that a Saint can give Grace to another, or hath any to spare?

4. Perhaps it implies this, viz. they fly to, and depend upon the Prayers of

the wise; *Give us of your Oyl*, that is, improve your Interest with God, your Faith in Prayer to God for us; but certainly there is more than this meant by the wise Virgins Answer, *Not so*, they would not deny them of their Prayers, but they denied them what they asked: *Go to them that sell*; pray your selves to God, we cannot help you. Sirs, such who depend upon the Prayers of others, and pray not themselves, are certainly foolish Persons.

5. It denotes, God leaves them to themselves, and to horrid Blindness.

Quest. *When will the Hypocrites Hope and Profession fail him?*

Ans. When Conscience is awake and terrifies him, and when he is in the greatest Need; moreover, be sure it will fail him at death, and in the day of Judgment: O see the woful state of Hypocrites!

SERMON XXII.

Matth. XXV. 8.

And the foolish said, Give us of your oyl, for our Lamps are gone out.

DOCT. *Lamps of Hypocrites will first or last go out.*

1. I shall shew you the cause why the Lamps of these Professors goe out.

2. Apply it.

1. One Reason why the Lamps of the foolish Virgins go out, is because they took no Oyl in their Vessels; the wise took Oyl in their Vessels with their Lamps: but Hypocrites go forth into a visible Profession without true Faith, or the saving Grace of the Spirit in their Hearts. It is positively said that the *foolish Virgins took their Lamps, but took no Oyl with them.* A Profession of Religion without Grace, and the saving Knowledge of Christ, will come to nothing.

Ver. 3.

2. Because the Oyl they had in their Lamps (as I told you) was only common grace, by the vertue of which they made a visible Profession of Religion; their Consciences might be enlightned, and their Affections moved with some seeming Heat and Zeal, but never were thoroughly converted; and thus it was with Judas and many others, who were called

K k k k k k

Christ

Christ's disciples, and followed him for a time.

3. No doubt but they had some Taste of the good Word of God, and arrived to some kind of Faith, but were without the indwelling of the Spirit, being neither united to Christ, nor having sincere love to him; but some sin or another was allowed and lived in, and had Power over them, they were counted Saints, but were not thoroughly sanctified, and tho they escaped outward Prophaneness, yet were not inwardly purged; and from hence their Lamps went out.

USE.

1. From hence we may infer, that God will at some time or another constrain foolish Professors to confess their own folly, and be self-condemned. *Our Lamps are gone out.* Saul was brought to confess that *David was more righteous than he*; God will make the stoutest Heart to yield and give Judgment against it self, and so cause the *Arrogancy of the proud to cease*.

1 Sam. 24.
17.

1a 13. 11.

2. We also infer that there are several sorts of Hypocrites; some will not own that their Lamps are without Oyl, but conclude their state is good, and that their Lamps burn as clear as any.

Quest. By what signs or Characters may such whose Lamps are going out, be known?

1. Ans. When a Person can hardly keep up a bare outward Profession, or his outward Conversation from some scandalous sin or another; some (whose Hearts are not upright) may walk in Appearance before men without Blame, or in a holy Conversation; but if a Professor falters here, and his life is observed to be scandalous, he being loose, earthly and carnal, or lives in some way of sin or another, it shews that his Lamp is gone, or is going out.

2. When Temptations are too strong, and given way unto, and indispensable Duties are neglected, and they will not be reclaimed, tho often sent to and admonished, yet, neglect of Prayer, Attendance upon Gods publick Worship is persisted in, and yet they seem little concerned, but will have one Excuse or another.

3. When some Notions of Religion are more affected than real Godliness, Love and Unity, and a Person seems proud and conceited, and on every smal Occasion he is ready to throw off his Communion with the Church.

4. When Convictions of sin, either of sins of omission or commission are not cherished, or a Person grows weary of

Duty, or very cold and remiss in them, or resteth upon the bare performance of them, tho very dully performed, and tho they grow earthly and lukewarm, yet are unsensible of it, and think they are *increased in Goods, and have need of no-thing*. Rev. 3. 17.

5. When Comfort is more sought and desired than Strength against sin, and Purity of Heart; some pretend they cannot profit under any Ministry that presses practical Holiness; no, but only that Doctrine pleaseth them, that raiseth their Affections, and fills them with Joy and Consolation; they eye more what Christ hath (as they think) done for them, than what by his Spirit he hath wrought in them.

But the Wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you, &c. ver. 9.

Here are three things to be observed.

1. The Request of the foolish Virgins, what it was, and also that it was denied by the wise.

2. The Reason why they denied their Request, *Lest there be not enough for us and you*.

3. The Advice and Counsel which the wise Virgins gave to the foolish, *But go rather to them that sell, &c.*

Some Expositors think the Answer of the wise doth not contain serious Advice to go to Jesus Christ, but rather that they spoke upbraidingly or ironically, according as God speaks, *Rejoyce, O Young man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee, and walk in the ways of thine own Heart, &c.* Or as *Elijah said to Baals Priests, He is a God, cry aloud, &c.* Eccl. 1. 8.
1 King 18. 22.

If it be thus taken, then it follows that Hypocrites in their Distress meet with no Pity, either from God or his People; God mocketh them when their fear cometh, *say the Lord laugheth at them, and he shall have them in derision.* This is spoken after the manner of men, to shew how God will aggravate the sinners Misery on him at the last: Moreover it is said, that *the Righteous also shall see and fear and laugh at him.* Prov. 1. 26.
Pf. 2. 4.
Pf. 52. 5.

They that take the Answer thus, intimate as if the wise Virgins should say, Go to your Workmongers, your Meritmongers, go to your drie Bottels, go to your empty Duties; as saith God, *Go to your Idols, or to the Fat of your Sacrifices*; you have made lies your refuge, now go and shelter your selves under them.

But I rather think that the wise Virgins gave them serious and sober Advice, and spake not ironically to them.

Quest.

Quest. *But why do not the wise rather reprove them (seeing their Lamps were gone out) than so calmly advise them?*

Ans. Because it becomes their Modesty to deal gently and mildly with them, also they would not provoke them; we are commanded *to follow peace with all men, also a gentle answer turns away wrath.*

2. May be the wise might perceive, that they were not capable to bare rebuke, or perhaps they might express to the wise a great Sence of their folly in sleeping so long, and to let their Lamps go out, and so needed no sharp Reproof.

3. Besides the wise Virgins might not know their state, and would not censoriously judge, nor charge them.

4. Or (as one notes) may be the foolish Virgins might be persons of higher Rank, (in respect of their outward State or Interest and Esteem in the Church) and this might put the wise upon a Temptation not to be too tart with them, (for the soundest Professors are not always the richest, nor had in the highest Esteem) or the foolish might be (saith he) men of greater parts, or seem like Stars of the first Magnitude.

Quest. *What is the meaning of the denial the wise gave them?*

1. Ans. Negatively, They did not deny them any civil Kindness, nor the help of their Prayers, nor any seasonable Advice and Instruction.

2. In the Affirmative, 1. Their Denial might be a sober and just reprehension for their coming unto them for Oyl, without taking any further pains, or be at any cost for it; perhaps they would have Grace, but not part with their sins: Wisdom is to be sought with the utmost Diligence, nor can a man be a Disciple of Christ, but he must deny himself, and he that bought the Pearl of great price, sold all he had to purchase it; but these foolish persons might not like the price on which Christ offers himself; for, *tho' Oyl and Wine is had without money and without price*; yet a right Eye Sin, and a right Hand sin must be parted with, and the Creatures old Rags must be cast off.

2. Their Denial may denote (as indeed it is partly expressed) that no sincere Christians can part with any of their Oyl, their Faith or Grace, to give it unto others; no, they can give no Faith, no Grace, to a Wife or dear Children, they cannot believe for them, nor repent for them, nor will the Parents being in the Covenant of Grace, be any saving Benefit to one Child; they must believe themselves, others can't (I say) believe for them, tho we may instruct poor Re-

lations and Neighbours, yet we cannot give to any the saving Knowledge of Christ; no, tho a Saint be filled with the Spirit, or is full of Grace, yet he can impart none of it to any other: God only is the Giver of Grace, Faith, as it is not of our selves, so it is the Gift of God. Eph. 2. 8.

3. It denotes, that sincere Christians have Grace little enough for themselves, and none to spare, (as they have no power to give to others) for he that hath the most, sees he hath but a little, he never thinks he hath enough for himself, and therefore is always desiring more; nay, all true Believers see a great Want of more Grace, more Faith, more Love, more Humility; tho' he be humble, yet he would be more humble, and therefore he crys for more Grace. (1.) Because of the sence he hath of the Corruptions of his own Heart, and of the Strength of Satans Temptations. (2.) Moreover he knows not what times of Need may come. (3.) Also the means of Grace may fail, a famine of the Word may overtake him, and times of greater Expence, when he may be forced to live partly upon the old stock. (4.) Or he may be called to harder Work, tho the Grace he hath may serve his present turn, or to discharge his present duties; yet he may meet with harder duties, he may be called to suffer for Christ, or to offer up his Isaac; (as Abraham was) which calls for a strong Faith.

4. Their Answer signifies that Believers are humble Persons, they are not so rich as to help their Neighbours, the wise see they have nothing to spare.

5. It may denote the high Regard they have for the Honour of Jesus, or will not eclipse his Glory, who only hath Grace to give to sinners. *Go to them that sell*; to the Fountain of Grace, and not to the Creature, nor to your Duties, none can help you but Jesus Christ alone.

6. It may signify that the wise Virgins would have the foolish see with their own Eyes, and believe with their own Hearts.

Some People live upon borrowing; so would the foolish Virgins: Some leave it to their Ministers to believe for them, they pin their Faith on their sleeves; my Minister is a learned Man, I believe as he believes: Some also would have their Parents Faith serve their Turn, and give a Right to them, both to the Promises and to Ordinances. This is indeed like going to the wife for Oyl.

7. Their Answer may signify that great Love the wise had to the Souls of the foolish, they send them to Jesus Christ; and who also says to them, *Buy of me.* Rev. 3. 18.

Lastly, Perhaps the wise were weary of their Company, and willing to be rid of them, since their Lamps were gone out, and

and with a loathsome stink, they being of ill and unholy lives might bring a Reproach upon Religion and a Dishonour upon Jesus Christ, being Professors and Church Members.

But go rather to them that sell, and buy for your selves, ver. 9.

We have no Oyl for you; go to the Father, and to Jesus Christ the Mediator.

Quest. *Why must they go to God, and to Christ Jesus, or to God in him.*

1. *Ans.* Because no Grace is to be had of any others, or any where else; Every good and perfect Gift cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights: And the Light of Knowledge, Grace, and all Spiritual Gifts in a peculiar manner are from God.

2. Because Jesus Christ hath bought or purchased the Oyl of Gladness, and all Spiritual Blessings for all who see the want of these things, and come to him believingly for them.

3. Because Jesus Christ the Mediator is the great Repository of all Grace, tho all Truth and Grace is essentially in God, yet it is all communicated to the person of Christ, considered as Mediator, it is laid up in him; *In whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*; hid from the World, lodged in him, to be secured for Believers, and not exposed to view of every Eye, but are given forth as he sees good to whom, and in what measure he pleaseth; it is from his Fullness that all Grace is received, and as Jesus Christ is the Repository of all Grace, so also the Outlet or Conduitpipe of it also: *Of his Fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.* And this is to exalt Jesus Christ, to magnifie the Person of Christ, and set forth his Glory, and therefore all that see a Want of Grace, must go to him; for as Pharaoh put all the Corn of the Land of Egypt into the Possession or Hands of Joseph, and all that wanted Corn, (who came to him) he sent them to Joseph: So all that need Grace, Wisdom, Knowledge, or any Spiritual good things, must go to Jesus Christ.

4. Because Jesus Christ is said to sell all things which sinners need: *Ho, every one that thirsteth come to the Waters, and he that hath no money, come buy Wine and Milk, &c.* compared with Rev. 3. 18. *Buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, &c.*

Quest. *But what is meant by buying Oyl, and why do they bid them go and buy?*

Ans. For the clearing of this part of the Parable, which may seem to some difficult, and opposite to the Doctrine of free Grace, I shall lay down for the open-

ing of it, one or two explanatory Propositions.

1. *Proposit.* Nothing is or can be more freely given than the Grace of God, (i.e.) the Spirit and Graces thereof; I need not cite Scriptures to confirm this.

2. *Proposit.* That the buying and selling mentioned here must therefore be quite different from buying in the common Acceptation, as among men.

1. This appears, because in buying something is commonly laid down or given which is of intrinsic Worth and Value with that which is bought: But no man hath any thing to give in Worth or Value with the Graces of the Spirit, besides we have nothing that we can call our own, but all we have is the Lords. Moreover, what is in Value with this blessed Oyl? *Who knoweth the price of Wisdom? her price is far above Rubbies, no man knoweth the price thereof.*

2. Because this is a buying without money and without price, that is, without money or moneys worth: This shews it is a quite different sort of buying from what is among men: Moreover, that which is had or bought without money or price, is given freely.

3. Because he that buys any thing in the common Acceptation of the Word, deserveth what he so buys; he giving its full worth either in Money or Goods, and he may demand as his just due what he hath so bought; but no man dare say that he deserveth the least morsel of Bread at the Hands of God, much less the saving Grace of God, nor can any man demand it of God as his due, upon the account of what he hath paid for it.

4. Because in common buying of any Commodity; the buyer who hath given a full price for it, is not look'd upon behold- ing to the seller, I have given you your full demands, saith he, I am not obliged to you, but you rather to me for my kindness in buying of you: But O how are sinners obliged unto God for all those good things they receive of him, especially for Grace and all Spiritual Blessings, and this indeed, because all is given freely to them as undeserving; nay, to ill deserv- ing Creatures, also *What do we give to God, or what receiveth he at our Hands?*

Quest. *These things being so, why are they bid to go and buy.*

1. *Ans.* It may be to shew us the worth of these things, for those things that are very precious, as Jewels, &c. are commonly bought, tho the paper and pack- thred, with which a Jewel may be bound up, is given freely, but the Jewel was bought

bought and paid for, so Christ and saving Grace is of infinite Worth.

Mat. 13. 46. II. And more directly, because in buying something is parted with by the sinner, he must part with all he hath (as I have shewed the Merchant man did for the Pearl of great price,) but alas they are things of no worth, but contrary wise are hurtful to his Soul; yet there is a necessity of parting with them.

1. By Vertue of Gods Command, he requires all poor sinners so to do.

2. By Reason of the sinners Unfitness, or moral Incapacity of enjoying these Spiritual things, unless he so do; for he must deny himself, that is, sinful self, religious self, and natural self also. For

3. A Dart that sticks in the flesh must be pulled out; if a man wounded therewith would be cured, if a member be corrupted and rotten, it must be cut off, and old filthy Rags must be cast off, if a man would be cloathed with a rich Robe; sin and Grace cannot reign in one and the same Heart at one and the same time, a man cannot truly seek the Honour of Christ, that chiefly seeks the Honour of men: Joh. 5. 44. *How can you believe that seek honour from one another, and not that honour that comes from God only.*

Lot must leave Sodom, if he will escape the consuming flames; and Moses must forsake Pharaohs Court, if he will be a Servant of God, and a Deliverer of Israel.

Phil. 3. 8, 9 III. It may be called a buying, because men commonly highly prize such things, that they have bought and parted with all they had to be possessed of for it: Paul set an inestimable Value upon Jesus, for the sake of whom he parted with all things that were before counted gain to him; he that will not part with his sins or unrighteousness, will not part with his own righteousness to be possessed with Grace, and cloathed with the Righteousness of Christ; which shews he little values Christ, or the Graces of Christ.

IV. Because that which a man buys he hath a proper Right to, and Propriety in, and is sure of; we call it our own, tho' we gave never so small a matter to have it, and also they know the time when they came to be possessed of it: No man can have Christ who is not brought for his sake to deny himself, take up his Cross and follow him; if we do not forsake our old Lovers, Christ will not espouse us.

Pro. 23. 23 V. Moreover, That which a man parts withall he hath to enjoy it, he will not soon part with; we are bid to *buy the Truth, and sell it not*; get it whatsoever the Cost be, but never part with it; get

Christ, the Fear of God or true Wisdom, let the Terms be what they will, you will have a good Bargain, and if you could have all the World, yet sell it not, part not with what you have obtained.

3. *Proposit.* That buying which is here meant, is not a purchasing or a procuring Condition, or a previous Qualification for Grace or to obtain Christ and his saving Benefits (as some speak of) I mean it is no federal Condition on our part to be performed, viz. Such a Condition which a sinner must answer, and the blessing will be withheld until he has on his part answered it, for this is a plain buying with money.

No, all federal or covenant Conditions in this Sence were performed by Jesus Christ our covenanting Head—Yet we will, if you please, grant it a Condition by way of *Connexion*; as thus, if you will have Union with Christ, you must receive the holy Spirit, or if you will put on the *New Man*, you must put off the *Old Man*; and if you will be justified, you must believe in Christ, or if you would be saved, you must be regenerated; so if you will have the Pearl, or Oyl in your Vessels, you must part with all you have to enjoy it: But pray remember, Faith to believe in Christ is as much the Gift of Gods Grace, and Christ is his Gift, whom Faith receives. Moreover, we need the same Power of God in a way of free Grace, to cast off the *Old man*, as we do to put on the *New man*, we can as soon remove a Mountain, as regenerate or change our own Hearts; yet this is required of all that will be saved: *Lazarus* must rise up out of the Grave, if he lives again; sinners are commanded to arise from the dead, as Christ commanded *Lazarus* to come out of the Grave; but yet a sinner has no more Power to do it of himself, than *Lazarus* had to raise himself, after he had been dead four days. *My Brethren*, A new Heart, Faith and Regeneration are a part of the Covenant, or contained in the free Promise of God to poor sinners, as much as the Spirit and Jesus Christ is part of it, as promised to be given freely, and therefore a new heart Faith and Repentance cannot be federal Conditions of the said Covenant of Grace.

VI. In a word, this buying denotes Gods infinite Love and Grace to all such who timely come and do buy, as any thing else whatsoever; for no man can or will part with all he hath for Christ, until the Spirit doth convince him of the infinite Worth that is in him, and of that Necessity of Union with him, and also not until almighty Power works Faith, by infusing a Principle of Life in the Soul.

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These

These poor wretches might go and ask the price of Oyl, but never came to Gods Terms; many would be saved who like not the Terms contained in the Gospel, and as they have no Power to come up to those Terms, so they seek not to God, nor improve the Means (or at least wise not timely) which God directs them to.

APPLICATION.

I. From hence we infer, that that which is said to be bought by us, is freely of Gods own sovereign Grace given to us. And this will further appear, if we consider these things following.

Rom. 5.

1. Because what the *Father*, or the *Son* are said to sell to us, the *Son* bought for us, and paid a full price for it, it was purchased for all Gods Elect by Christ with his own money; divine Justice having received full Payment; but to us *Christ*, his *Righteousness* and all things are freely given, who were unworthy of the least Favour, being guilty Criminals; we merited not, bought nothing with our money, but Christ bought and paid for all with his own money only; Christ purchased, and we possess: and thus *buying* and *free giving* are consistent with each other, doth the Father sell the same things twice, or require double federal Conditions! and tho Christs money went for part of Payment, our money doth procure the actual Possession of the Bargain or Inheritance? God forbid any should argue after such a manner.

2. Because God freely also gives Grace, tho he be said to sell it, and we to buy it.

(1.) This must be granted, because our buying is no gain to him: *What dost thou give to him, or what receiveth he at thy hands?* He empties our Vessels, and then with his own rich and precious Oyl he fills them.

(2.) Because a Heart and Power to buy, or to receive Jesus Christ, the Spirit, and Graces of the Spirit, are as much an act of Christs Love, and his free Gifts to us, as Grace it self, and all those Blessings received, it is of his working in us that we are made willing; for it is *God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

(3.) Consider, (tho' God is said to sell, and we to buy) what a vast Difference there is between the Worth of what we part with, and that which we receive of him; see what he saith, *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, and the oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.* The Oyl of Joy, this is the Oyl the foolish Virgins went to buy;

and see what God saith to humble Souls, he hath appointed the Oyl of Joy for mourning, but he knowing the hardness of a sinners Heart, and that they can't mourn for sin, until he breaks them into pieces, he *pours upon them the Spirit of Grace and Supplication*; and by that means they are helped to look up to him whom they pierced, and then they mourn, and not till then.

2. *Exhort.* Be exhorted you poor sinners, who have no Grace, no Oyl, to go to Jesus Christ; go you that have no money, he offers it freely, whatsoever Christ saith, be sure that do, bring your empty Vessels before him, go as sinners, as having nothing, no money, resolve to give up all as lost for Christ, and count whatsoever you have valued formerly, as dung; this is the way to buy; and are not these easy Terms? confess your Ignorance, and cast off your false Confidence. — What Fools are they who refuse to buy of one that sells on such Terms, *what, without money and without price*, and yet will any refuse to buy of him?

III. Here is Comfort and Encouragement to Believers. Ye doubting and drooping Saints, tho' you have Oyl, yet you may need Wine: *O buy Wine and Milk*, Wine to cheer you; you may have whole Flaggons in the Covenant Promises, to revive your sinking and fainting Spirits; and you *Babes in Christ*, who want milk, Christ sells milk as well as wine; attend upon the Word, lay aside all earthly Business, and draw at the Breasts of the Promises and Ordinances, you may boldly come and be supplied with whatsoever you need; if any thirst, Christ hath *Water of Life*, *whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.*

SERMON XXIII.

Mat. XXV. 9.

But rather go to them that sell and buy for your selves.

I Have opened the Nature of this buying, and answered several Questions, there is yet one or two more, which I purpose to resolve.

Quest. What Directions are further necessary about Gospel buying?

The Answer shall be twofold.

1. By way of Parity.

2. By

2. *By way of Disparity.*

Rev. 3. 17. I. By way of Parity; you that would buy of Christ, must see or be convinced of the Need of that you would buy (thus it is among men that go to the Market) those in *Laodicea* did not know the Want of any thing, they thought they were increased in Goods, and had need of nothing.

2. Nay such that would buy of Christ, ought to be convinced in the highest Degree of their Need, or see the Necessity they have of Oyl, Wine and Milk. People may want many things, but they may do well enough without them, but some things men want they must have, or they can't live: So sinners must have Grace, they must have Christ, the Bread of Life, or else they will perish for ever. Thirsty persons must have Water, and something to drink; and naked people must have Cloaths to cover them: So sinners must have Water of Life, and Christs white Raiment to cloath them; they must believe: *He that believeth not shall be damned.* It was meer Necessity that moved *Jacob* to send his Sons down to *Egypt* to buy Corn; *that we may live* (saith he) *and not die.* You sinners that see no Necessity of Christ, and of the Spirit and Graces of Christ, will not buy upon Gospel Terms. The foolish Virgins for want of Oyl were shut out of the Marriage Chamber, and they not seeing the Necessity of their Want of it sooner, was the cause they went to buy when it was too late. There is a Necessity of Grace.

(1.) Because there is no man can be converted or regenerated without it.

(2.) None can believe until they receive the Spirit, which is the Seed of Faith.

(3.) Cannot see until they have Christs Eye Salve to open their Understandings; Faith is the Eye by which we see Christ, the Feet by which we go to Christ, the Hand by which we receive Christ, the Mouth by which we taste how good he is.

II. He that would buy, considers as he hath not the things he wants, and as there is a Necessity of them; so also he must know whither to go to be supplied with them. So sinners must know that they have nothing of their own to supply their Wants, and also must go to him that sells; *they must not look within* for Light and Righteousness, they have within no *Evangelical Light*, nor justifying Righteousness, what good will natural, moral, or legal Light or Righteousness do them? even none at all, as to Justification and Eternal Life; and this they will see at last, whatsoever their Confidence may be now, thro' Blindness and Delusions of sin and Satan and Deceivers.

Go to them that sell.

This denotes they must go out of themselves; their Hearts and Vessels are empty, and not one dram of Oyl in them naturally, but are wholly in Darkness: *And if that Light which is in thee, be Darkness, how great is that Darkness!* Grace is only in Christ, and life also: *Whither shall we go, thou hast the Words of eternal Life.* Luk. 11. 34, 35. Joh. 6. 68.

III. You must also know the Worth of Grace, and how to use it, and not make a Saviour of Faith, or think Faith as a Habit or as an Act, is that which is your Righteousness, or the Matter that justifies your Persons; no, tho thereby you receive Christ and Righteousness with him, yet you must know you cannot have Christ nor Righteousness without Faith, and therefore ought to know the Worth of it, or that it is *more precious than Gold that perishes*, nay, than *Gold tried in the fire.* Who will buy the Pearl that knows not it is a Pearl of great price? will he sell all for it unless he is convinced of the infinite Worth that is in it?

IV. Such that would buy must know the Market place, or where what he wants are sold, (as well as who sells them:) So sinners must know the Spiritual Market-place and Market-days, they must go to the Assemblies of Gods People, and attend upon the Word of God on those days where and when it is truly preached. Merchants resort to the Exchange, and attend Exchange-times: So must sinners know Gods Exchange-time, and get among the People of God, and learn Experiences of them who are old Traders, and not go where counterfeit Goods are sold, or they may soon be undone by being cheated, and think they have got Christ and true Faith, when they have not, but 'tis a false Christ and counterfeit Faith, or nothing but a *common*, a *temporary*, or a *presumptuous* Faith.

V. They must come to the Market timely, or not delay until the Market is over, or the Summer is ended: The *foolish Virgins* were ruined by their Folly in this case, they went not to buy until it was too late: *Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of Salvation* — 2 Cor. 6. 2. Heb. 6. 3. 7. *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

VI. Such that would buy, would do well to go before the price of what they need be raised. *My Brethren*, Jesus Christ seeing sinners slight and abuse his Favours, condemn and make light of his Word and heavenly Manna, or refuse his Calls and gracious Tenders of Grace, sometimes withholds, and keeps back the precious things of the Gospel, so that they grow scarce and are hard to come at, and

and he raises the price of his blessed Commodities this way; nay, he threatens a famine *not of Bread, nor of thirst of Water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord*: you may not have hereafter those precious things your Souls need, but it may cost your dear, even the loss of your Liberties, Goods, nay, perhaps the loss of your Lives, or the Word of God may be so precious, that there may be no open vision.

VII. You that would buy, must not come to cheapen only, but resolve to buy whatsoever it cost you; for Christ will not abate you any thing of the old price, (*i.e.*) of denying your selves, taking up your Cross, and following him; and if you think the price too hard, and that it may cost you your Lives, know *He that seeks to save his Life shall lose it.*

Mat. 16.
24, 25.

VIII. You that would buy, must not consult with your Friends, no, not with Father or Mother, Son or Daughter, Husband nor Wife, you must not ask them whether you shall buy or not, become a Disciple of Christ or not, and refuse so to do unless they consent; you must not say with the man in the Gospel, *Suffer me first to bid them farewell that are at my house, or suffer first to bury my Father, no; or you must not consult with Flesh and Blood; proud Flesh thinks scorn to receive all freely; no, he will pay for what he hath, he will buy with his money, or have no Christ, something (he thinks) he must do; others consult, their carnal Ease, their outward Honour among men, but you must do as Paul did, not consult with flesh and blood.*

Secondly, By way of Disparity.

1. You must carry no Money to the Market with you; this perhaps some will say is a strange way to buy.

2. You must buy, and yet you cannot unless you die, I mean die to sin, to self, and to this World.

3. Believeers you must buy, tho you see not, feel not, *believe in hope against hope*; tho every thing seems to lie against your sense, and above your carnal Reason, yet believe; tho you are sinners in your selves, yet believe, in Christ you are perfect, and without spot or blemish: And sinners, tho you are never so vile, yet believe in Christ for Righteousness; and you Saints that are in Darkness, and have no Light, *yet stay*

Isa. 50. 10. *your selves upon your God.* Some could buy, if they could but find all sin dead in them, and they were more spiritual and holy or lively, and what is this but to buy when you have got some money, or something of your own?

4. Think not that you shall have Oyl or any Spiritual Blessing for the sake of any thing you must and are commanded to part with, or that the Terms of the

Gospel are a purchasing Condition: But having spoken to that already, I shall say no more to it now.

USE.

1. You may learn from hence the Mystery of Gospel buying.

2. This may inform poor sinners of the Danger they are in, by following the dark Principles of humane Reason, and the natural and legal Light that is in them.

3. Moreover, by what means many are deceived, and perish for ever; and may learn hereby to know whether they have yet bought or not, those things their Souls need.

And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him into the Marriage Chamber. vers. 10.

In these Words are four parts.

1. An Account of what the foolish Virgins did,—*They went to buy.*

2. Their Disappointment—*While they went to buy the Bridegroom came.*

3. The Happiness of the Wise, *they were ready.*

4. The woful State of the foolish—*The door was shut.*

Doct. *Some Persons go to buy or provide Oyl for Christs coming, when 'tis too late.*

In speaking to this, I shall shew you,

1. *What their going to buy may denote.*

2. *Shew you at what time or times it will be too late.*

3. *Shew why Christ will come before some are ready.*

1. Their going to buy may signify some Thoughts or Inclinations they had, to lay hold of Christ by Faith: Some say, We go, Sir, but go not, they have a faint Resolution, but never prosecute it; the foolish Virgins made a shew of going to buy.

2. It may denote their going to the Market, I mean to hear the Word of God, which perhaps they before had much neglected; they went to the Assemblies of Gods People, with some kind of Resolution to get ready or prepare for another World, above what they had done before or in former times, being awakened by the Cry that was heard.

3. Their going to buy may also denote their cheapening or asking the price of those things they wanted; like those people the Prophet speaks of: *And they come to thee as the people cometh, and they hear thy Words, but they will not do them*: the love of the World, or of some beloved Lusts, hindered them from buying.

4. And it may denote also their crying to God, or their calling upon him more than

Ezek. 33.

than they had done by Prayer, for this is one way of going to buy; but perhaps they rested upon the bare performance of this and other duties: Many think hearing and praying is buying; but, my Brethren, asking is one thing, and receiving is another, or else they asked amiss, or continued not without fainting in their Prayers and Cries to God; for Hypocrites will not always call upon God.

5. Some are always going, but never go, and may be this is signified here by these words.

Secondly, *I shall shew you what time, or times will it be too late to go to buy.*

When or at what time it is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved. I. When the Market day is over, or when the Summer is ended: *The Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved.* Some sleep in Harvest, so too many sleep away that time which God allows them to provide for their Souls, Jer. 8. 20. which is their Spiritual Harvest-time. Prov. 10. 5.

Our Fathers sowed the seed of the Gospel by their Prayers and Tears about Sixty years agoe, and we have had a plentiful Harvest, and our Harvest is at present great, but I fear we by our sins are like to lose what they procured as the Answer of their Prayers. Our Harvest may soon be ended, and the Market-day of buying be gone.

Prov. 6. 8. The wise, like the Ant, gathers their Food in the Harvest, whilst the Foolish like the sluggard is asleep; this is the Sinners day, the day of his Visitation: Luk. 19. 42 — *if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thy Eyes.* The Old World had their day, and the Jews had their day, in which the Gospel was preached to them; God allows men a day or season of Grace, but they know not how long it may last, and when that day is gone, it will be too late, and the sinners case then is desperate.

II. When the Spirit of God hath done striving; or will strive no more with Sinners, then it will be too late, the door will then be shut. *My Spirit shall not always strive with men.* The Spirit strove to convince the foolish Virgins, of their Sin and Danger, and shewed them their need of Christ, and of true Faith in Christ, or of having Oil in their Vessels; but they regarded not the strivings of the Holy Ghost, but resisted his motions and Operations, and the Reproofs of their own Consciences; and when the Spirit is grieved, and withdraws from poor sinners, and all its Influences cease, then it is too late to get Oyl, and all Endeavours then will be in vain and fruitless.

III. When God gives men up to their own Hearts Lusts, or in Judgment hardens their Hearts, and gives them up to blindness of Mind, it will be too late to

repent, or to seek Oyl: *But my People would not hearken to my Voice, Israel would have none of me, so I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own Counsel.* What blindness of mind, unbelief, and hardness of Heart were the Jews left unto, and abide under the power of unto this day, for their rejecting of Christ and the Gospel. Psal. 82. 12

IV. When death comes and cuts the sinner off in his sins, then it is too late; such that die in their sins are lost for ever; and O how often doth Death come suddenly upon many persons! they think of many days on Earth, and that it is time enough, they boast themselves of to morrow, tho they know not what a day may bring forth. Many are well to day and dead to morrow; nothing is more uncertain than natural Life, death comes upon some when they little think of it. *Thou fool, this night thy Soul shall be required of thee,* and such fools were the foolish Virgins. Prov. 27. 1.

V. When the Bridegroom comes, if men are not ready, it will be too late, for then the door will be shut: O how many will the day of Christs coming find unprovided! He will come as a Thief in the Night, i. e. very suddenly, unexpectedly, and very surprizingly upon the World, and upon many Professors also.

Thirdly, *Why will our Lord come upon some before they are ready?* Why will Christ come upon some before they are ready?

I. Answ. The exact time, my Brethren, of Christs coming is determined, and when that time is come, he will stay not one moment longer, whether men be prepared or not. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Will the Lord put off the time of his coming (which is fixed by an unalterable Decree) because some slothful Servants are not ready? No sure. Heb. 10. 37

II. Because when Christ comes, all his Elect will be gathered in, and no sooner is that done will he stay one day, no not one hour; all his Patience and Forbearance with the World, is for his Elects sake; therefore such who are not prepared in that time, or are not converted or provided with grace, before the whole number of the Elect are brought home, Christ will come upon tho they are wholly unprepared, or unprovided for his coming; for all means of Grace then will cease for ever.

III. Because when Christ comes the Harvest will be fully ripe, all men will either be ripe for Salvation or for Damnation, all the Wheat will be then ripe for Christs garner, and the Tares will be also ripe to be cast into the fire.

IV. Christ will come upon some who are not ready, because all had warning given, sufficient warning, and great means.

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God used with them, and gave time enough also to get ready, which they neither regarded nor Improved. But,

Consider a little further, the Warning Christ gave to, and the means he used with the foolish Virgins.

(1.) They had the Word preached to them, and other Ordinances as well as the wise. (2.) They had the Beauty, Glory, and Excellencies of the Person of the Bridegroom displayed before their Eyes, and also the need they had of him. (3.) They had the Spirit to strive with them; and their Consciences also awakened to discover their folly, in that they took their Lamps, but no Oyl in their Vessels. (4.) They conversed with the wise, and their advantages were not small upon that account, they might have learned more wisdom of them, and by their telling them their Experiences, their foolish Hearts might have received Instruction. (5.) They were told of the woeful State and End of all hypocritical Professors. (6.) They saw how long Christ waited before he came.

God usually gives warning before he comes upon a people in a way of Judgment.
V. Christ will come upon the foolish Virgins before they are ready, and will yet leave them without Excuse, because they heard that the Bridegroom was coming; they heard, nay were told of his near approaching and glorious appearance, but took not timely warning to get ready: In Gods ordinary Providence in coming upon a People in a way of Judgment, he commonly gives them Warning. *Now thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Israel.* This being so, we may be sure Christ will give warning before he comes at the last day: And thus he will leave not only the foolish Virgins but all the World without any Excuse.

Isa. 1. 5. Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more? — Let favour be shewn to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, in the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord.
VI. Because should our Lord wait longer, or stay longer before he comes, he knows that these Professors would be the same, and not take warning but adhere to the Devil and to their own deceitful Hearts: He foresees that no further means will make them better. *Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more? — Let favour be shewn to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, in the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord.* This being so, it would be vain for him to wait longer upon them.

VII. Because God will glorifie his Justice on such who have abused his Mercy, and slighted all the Offers of his grace, goodness, long-suffering, patience, and forbearance; as well as glorifie his grace, love and Mercy on such who are the Vessels of Mercy. God will be as much glorified in the destruction of the wicked, as in the salvation of the righteous: And

hence his *Ministers are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.* ^{2Cor. 2. 15}

VIII. Because the Wedding-day will then come, even the set time; for tho none know of the day nor hour of Christs personal coming, yet that day is fixed, and when it is fully come he will wait no longer (as I shewed you before:) Will an earthly Prince, that hath determined and set the very day of his Marriage, and provided all things for that Solemnity, and his Princely Bride hath made herself ready, put off the Marriage day because some slothful Servants are not prepared for that day? No certainly, all will say he'll never do that, much less will the *Lord Jesus*, since his Coming is prefix'd by the eternal and unrevokable Decree of his Father.

APPLICATION.

Exhort. Be exhorted whoever you are that be not yet ready, to buy Oyl, and be prepared to part with all (and that timely too) you have, for the *Pearl of great price*; do not delay to get true faith, and a holy and sanctified Heart, lay hold upon the present time, fall in with the Motions of the holy Spirit, and with the Convictions of your own Consciences; and you that are Professors and Church-members, do not rest satisfied with your Lamps, having no Oyl in your Vessels.

For *Motives*,

1. You hear of the great and wonderful favour and goodness of God, in giving you such repeated Warnings of the danger you are in, and how inexcusable he will leave all men, and you especially at the great day.

2. That the Lord Jesus hath tarried long, and hath spread out his hands all the day long, is there any thing of such moment as this? doth it not concern the eternal Happiness of your precious Souls? O how will many cry out when it is too late, and wish they had been so wise to have considered their latter End, and not spent that time on Earth about Eating and Drinking, and living well for a moment in the World, when there was one thing ten thousand times more needfull which was neglected, by their being incumbered with many things not worth regard comparably.

3. Consider the fearful state of such whom that day, or the day of Death finds Christless, and graceless. O how will they wish they could but live over those years and days again which God gave them when on Earth, so as to enjoy the favour of God, and Means of Grace they then had! But alas all will be in vain, such wishes will be fruitless, for perish then for ever they must; therefore be-

cause

cause there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, when a great ransom cannot deliver thee. The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all wicked and graceless sinners, nay such who believe not in Christ are under wrath; all in the first Adam are Children of wrath, and untill they have an interest in Christ that wrath abideth on them. But no wrath will be more dreadful than that wrath that hath been long a kindling in the Heart of God, some are said to heap up wrath against the day of wrath, and the Blood of Christ can't then deliver them.

4. Consider the Happiness of those who are truly wise, who shall then be received into the Marriage Chamber: As the Sorrows of the wicked will be inconceivable, so will the Joys and Consolation of the Godly.

SERMON XXIV.

MATH. XXV. 10.

— And the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage Chamber, &c.

FROM hence note,

Doct. The Lord Jesus Christ will come again, or appear the second time.

In speaking to this Proposition,

1. I shall prove that Christ shall or will come again.
2. Give some Reasons why the Lord Christ will come again, or appear the second time.
3. Shew how he shall appear.
4. Lay down a few of the Signs of his coming.
5. Shew how we may be said to be ready.
6. Who they are that will not be ready.
7. Shew what may be meant by shutting the door.

I. First, to prove he will come again.

1. Because he hath himself assured his Saints or all his people, of this very thing, he hath promised us that he will come again. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to my self, that where I am ye may be also. The particle *if*, in this place (as our Annotators observe) denoteth no uncertainty of the thing whereof he had before assured them, but the certainty of it: As sure (as if he should say) as I go away, or go to to my Father, so sure know that I will come

again: Now they after this saw him go away, or ascend up into Heaven, so that this is a full proof of his second coming. I might add many other Promises which our Saviour himself made of his coming again, before he ascended; in the 18 vers. I will come to you.

2. We have the Promise of God the Father also; the Father hath promised that he will send Jesus Christ again: And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was from heaven. — whom the Heavens must receive untill the times of the restitution of all things, &c. Thus we have the Promise both of the Father and the Son for the coming of the Lord Jesus the second time: But because this will be further confirmed in the Reasons I purpose to give to shew why he will come, I shall proceed to speak to the next thing.

Secondly, Why will the Lord Jesus come again?

1. Answer. Because he will answer the Prayers of his People; the Prayers of his People will not let him rest untill he comes (as I may so say:) I have set watchmen upon thy walls O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, — give him no rest: And (if you look back to the Verse going before) he shews the Bridegroom would come and marry, and rejoyce over his Bride, as he hath promised. The prayer of the Saints is continually, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly; Their Prayers must be answered. Shall not God hear his own Elect, that cry unto him both day and night?

2. Our blessed Lord will come again, because his People look for him, or wait for his appearance, they expect his coming; and the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. — The Virgins waited for his coming, nay went forth to meet him, and the wise with the greatest expectation imaginable, and shall they be ashamed of their hope? no sure.

(1) Their Expectation is well grounded, they build their Hope and Expectation upon the Truth or Veracity of God.

(2) They earnestly expect Christs coming; nay the Creatures are said thus to do. The earnest expectation of the Creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; — and not only they, but our selves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our Body. The whole Creation waits and expects virtually this day, but Gods people actually and believingly expect it. How the Creation waits with earnest expectation, and shall be delivered from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, I think this is one of those things very hard

to be understood: Tho some think the Apostle refers to the state of the whole Creation in the time of the *Thousand Years Reign*, which commenceth from the first appearance of Christ when he comes the second time, then the Curse shall be taken off from all Creatures, which are made slaves of by Man.

(3) The Saints have long expected the coming of Christ.

(4) His coming is and hath been the Expectation of all the Children of God, or the Members of the whole universal Church.

(5) It is the Expectation of the Souls of Believers who are dead; as they dyed in full expectation of it, so their Souls cry under the Altar, *how long, Lord, holy and true, ere thou avenge our blood?* — That will not fully and for ever be, untill Christ comes.

3. Christ will come to perform or make good his own most gracious Promise, and the Promise of the Father, for such Scriptures as well as others cannot be broken. Our Lord did not only when he was upon the Earth, and before he dyed, promise that he would come again, but also after he went to Heaven: *He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give unto every one as his works shall be.*

Observe it well, they are some of the last words of the holy Bible; as the Old Testament ended in *Malachi* with the Promise of Christs first Coming, so the New ends with Christs own Promises of his second Coming. The Apostle *Peter* saith, That in the latter dayes many scoffers will say, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* we can shew such scoffers; multitudes of clear Promises, and he that made these Promises is the true and faithful Witness, and he hath commanded these Promises to be written: *And he said write, for these words are true and faithful; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, &c.*

4. Because of that general testimony that is born to this Truth, viz. to the second coming of the Lord Christ. The Father and the Son have not only born witness to it, but also

(1) All the holy Prophets since the World began. See *Act. 3. 21.* Before the Flood *Enoch*. And *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, &c. This

must refer to our Lords second coming, for when he first came, he came to execute Judgment upon none.

(2) All the holy Apostles also have born witness hereunto. *Peter* in two or three places, both in the *Acts*, and in his Epistles. *Paul* in several of his Epistles: *Waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus*

Christ: — *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* *John* also beareth witness to Christs second coming. Behold he cometh in the Clouds, and every eye shall see him, &c. *James* doth the same; Be patient brethren to the coming of the Lord.

— Be patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near. And *Jude* bears witness to it in citing *Enoch* (mentioned before): many Truths are fully confirmed, but certainly but few like this. The holy Spirit hath it appears also born witness to this glorious Truth, because both the Prophets and Apostles in these things (as well as in all others) as they were inspired and moved by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit spoke in them, and by them; and as the Spirit beareth witness hereunto, so both the Spirit and the Bride desire Christ to come: And the Spirit and the Bride saith come.

Lastly, The holy Angels also witness to Christs second Coming, as they bore witness that our Lord was risen from the dead: And while they looked stedfastly towards Heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white Apparel, which said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven, this same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall in like manner come as ye have seen him go up into Heaven.

5. The Lord Jesus the blessed Bridegroom shall come again, because the Bride makes her self ready for that day, and then, and not untill then, expecteth her day. Marriage with him will be solemnized.

6. Christ will come that his Glory may be revealed: Christs glory is veiled now, and is not seen to men, nor Saints on Earth, as it will in that day. Thine Eyes shall see the King in his beauty. — When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye appear with him in glory.

7. He will come to take Vengeance on all his and his Peoples Enemies; this is one reason wherefore he will come again. He will then execute his wrath on them, for he will appear in that day like a Lion, and come upon Princes as upon Mortar.

8. The Lord Jesus will come, because all the Kingdoms of the World are given unto him, and he shall reign a thousand years upon the Earth with his Saints. I see no room for any to doubt of this, tho some take it for a mystical Reign. A King shall reign in righteousness, and Princes decree Judgment: These Princes are the Saints no doubt; the time then will come when the Saints shall fully and quietly possess the Kingdom, yea all the Kingdoms under the whole Heavens. — Blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the Earth.

9. He will come to Judge the World: they that deny Christs second coming, may as well deny the Eternal Judgment, or the day of Judgment: — who shall judge

All the Prophets bear witness to Christs second coming.

All the Apostles also bear witness to Christs second coming. *Act. 3. 20, 21.* *2 Pet. 3. 10*

1 Cor. 1. 7.
Cap. 15. 23.
Cap. 3. 13.
1 Thel. 2. 19.
Cap. 4. 15.
Heb. 10. 37.
Rev. 1. 7.
Jam. 5. 7, 8.
The holy Spirit beareth witness to the coming of Christ.

The Angels bear witness to Christs second coming.
Act. 1. 10, 11.

Christ will come because that is his Marriage day.

Christ will come to manifest his glory.
Col. 3. 3.

To execute vengeance also on his enemies.

Rev. 20.
Dan. 7. 27.

Dan. 7. 27.
Rev. 20.
1. 12. 13.

²Tim. 4. 1. *the quick and the dead at his Appearance and his Kingdom.* The Judgment cannot be in Heaven, for no unholy persons can enter into Heaven; it must therefore be either in the Air or on the Earth, but 'tis said, *his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives*; the Saints also, when raised, and those that shall be changed shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air: Which clearly shews, he designs to come hither, besides all those Places and Promises that relate to Christs coming, must be understood of his coming upon the Earth, where he once was and suffered shame, from whence our Lord ascended; from whence he will ascende, he will descend, but he ascended from the Earth, therefore he shall descend to the Earth; and to deny this, is to deny his second coming.

¹Thess. 4. 16, 17. *Lastly, Christ will come again, because all Shadows must fly away, he comes to put an end to Shadows; until the day break, and the Shadows fly away. Turn my Beloved, and be like a Roe or young Hart upon the mountains of Bethel.*

¹Cor. 11. 26. *1. All Shadowy Ordinances, (1) Baptism and the Lords Supper will cease then: As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye shew the Lords death until he come: these Ordinances shall abide till then, and no longer. The Apostle refers not to his extraordinary coming in Spirit, or in pouring out of the Spirit, because he received a Charge from Christ to administer this Ordinance, and to leave it in the Church to abide after Christ came in that extraordinary manner. Paul was not converted for some time after the day of Pentecost, when Christ came to his Saints in Spirit, according to his promise, so in the case of Baptism such were commanded in the Name or Authority of Christ to be baptized in water, that were baptized before with the holy Ghost, see Act. 10. 47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the holy Ghost as well as we? — and he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.*

^{Act. 10. 47, 48.} *2. Christ appears to vanquish all Shadows and Clouds of Gods dark Providences, then we shall see and behold things clearly, that now are not discerned by us.*

3. To expell all Clouds and Shadows that interpose between himself and his Church, and that obscure his own glorious Beauty. — And

4. The Shadows of Death, Sadness and Darknes, when Christ comes shall fly away; they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, Sorrow and Sighing shall fly away. So much as to this.

Thirdly, I shall hint how he shall appear, (but because I have before, and in open-

ing another Parable spoken to this,) I shall be very brief on it here.

1. He shall appear personally, it is his personal Appearance I speak of here.

The same Jesus that you have seen taken up into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. ^{Act. 1. 10, 11.}

The very Body, tho glorified, that dyed, rose again, and ascended, not another body but the same.

2. He shall appear very glorious.

(1.) He shall come in the Glory of the Father, and the holy Angels. ^{Matt. 16. 27.} *What Glory of the Father will shine forth we know not.*

(2.) In his own Glory: When the Son of man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, &c. ^{Mat. 9. 31}

There will be a glorious Manifestation of the Glory of his own Person.

(3.) He shall then sit upon the Throne of his Glory: that

when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy. ^{1 Pet. 4. 13}

Again it is said that he shall appear in Power and great Glory. ^{Mat. 24. 30}

But this will be to the Comfort and Joy of all Believers. For (4.) To sinners he will appear terrible, even in

flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. ^{2 Thess. 1. 8.}

Fourthly, I shall give you a few of the Signs of Christs second coming.

1. The World abounding with false Teachers, and the rising of false Christs, is laid down to be one sign of his coming: There shall arise false Christs and false ^{The signs of Christs coming.}

Prophets, — that if it were possible, they should deceive the very Elect. ^{Mat. 24. 24} *No days certainly like to these we see upon this respect.*

2. Strange Signs in the Sun, Moon and Stars, and upon the Earth Distress of Nations with Perplexity, &c. ^{Luk. 21. 25}

See what our Saviour further saith, And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, ^{Ver. 26. 27}

lift up your Heads, for your Redemption draweth near even (at the door).

3. Pestilence, amazing Earthquakes, Wars and Famine in several Places.

5. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be,

eating, drinking, building and planting, Marrying and being given in Marriage; ^{Ver. 39.}

all generally will be very secure, and act as if the World was but just begun.

5. The slumbering State of the Virgins is also laid down by our Lord as one Sign of his coming, which certainly is upon us in these Nations, and in all other Nations, where Christ hath a people professing his Gospel and blessed Truth.

6. The passing away of the second Wo, and sounding of the seventh Angel, and the pouring forth of the seven Vials, or the seven last Plagues, and utter Overthrow of Babylon will precede the coming of Christ, and be a Presage thereof.

7. The preaching of the Gospel to all

Nations: The Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all the World for a Witness unto them, and then cometh the End. The Heathen or Pagan Nations, and Mahometans must have the Gospel preached to them before the coming of our Lord, and so shall the Antichristian Nations also, which cannot be till the fall of *Mystical Babylon*; and this will be the bringing in the Fullness of the Gentiles.

8. The calling of the Jews will be another Sign of Christs coming; tho some think they shall not be called until Christ appears.

They that were ready went in with him into the Marriage Chamber, &c. This brings me to the next thing.

Fifthly, I shall shew, who they are that may be said to be ready, or what the Brides being ready may denote or signifie.

What it is to be ready for the Bridegrooms coming.

1. To be ready doth denote our having not only Lamps, and Oyl in our Vessels, and so habitually ready; but our Lamps being lighted and burning clearly, and so being actually ready also.

2. It may denote our being every way rightly prepared, clothed and adorned as a Bride for the Bridegrooms coming, or for the Marriage-day, having on all our glorious Attire: *The Bride hath made herself ready, and it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine Linnen clean and white, for the fine Linnen is the Righteousness of Saints.* This certainly signifies the Exercises of all our Graces, and our shining forth in Faith and Holiness: *Let your Loyns be girded, and your Lights burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding.* To have our Loyns girded, is to be established in the Truth, and sincere and upright in Heart; *Having your*

Eph. 6. 14. Loyns girt about with Truth.

3. To be ready is to have all our sins mortified, or in a good measure (by the Power of the Spirit) subdued, every Lust having received its death wound, or having in some considerable Degree overcome all the Enemies of their Souls; such have doubtless mourned over their former sins, Deadness, Lukewarmness, Earthliness, and so do labour to do their first Works, for they are such that overcome, *that shall set down with Christ in his Throne.*

Rev. 3. 21.

4. To be ready, is to have done the whole Will of God, or to have with *Paul fought the good fight, to have finished our course, and kept the Faith*; He having done this, saith he was ready to be offered, or ready to die, and to go to receive the Crown of Life. *David, when he had done the Will of God, fell asleep.* Our Lord himself until he had finished his whole Work, was not ready to go to his Father:

Joh. 9. 4. I must work the Work of him that sent me while it is day. A man that hath any

Work to do (that appertains to such a precise day) is not ready to go to bed, until he hath done it.

5. To be ready denotes a waiting Posture; a Person cannot be said to wait for the coming of his Friend to go out with him, who is not ready.

6. For the Bride to be ready may denote the whole Body of the Elect being called, and so the Mystical Body of Christ compleat; for until every one is renewed and united by the Spirit to the Head, the Bride is not ready.

What the Bride being ready denotes.

There are four things essential to render the Bride ready

1. The bringing in or calling of the Gentiles.

2. The calling of the Jews, therefore they must be called before the Marriage-day.

3. The uniting both the Jews and Gentiles in one Body.

4. The raising of the Bodies of all the Saints; for until the Bodies of all Saints be raised or changed, and their Souls and Bodies are united together, the Bride is not ready.

APPLICATION.

1. From hence we may further learn, what the Reason is why Christ seems to tarry. (1) That the wicked may fill up their Measure of sinning, and so be ripe for the Harvest. (2) That the godly may fill up their measure of suffering, that are behind for his Bodies sake, which is the Church. (3) That the whole Church may be compleat and every ways ready. (4) That all the Promises and Prophecies contained in the Scriptures, relating to the latter days, may be fully accomplished.

Col. 1. 24.

2. *Exhort.* Take heed you do not say in your Heart, My Lord delays his coming, and so lay your self down to sleep, *or eat and drink with the drunken.*

Mat. 24. 49

3. Let us awake out of sleep, and stir up our selves, and speedily hasten to attend upon Christ in the Wedding Chamber, or to be ready for Eternity for Christs coming, and for the Judgment Day. Let us see that we are like a Bride dressed and every way adorned for the Marriage-day.

Exhort.

(1) The Earth (as one observes) is our trimming-place for Heaven. (2) It is the Property of Virgins to be adorned, (their greatest care is to see to that) who know the set day of their Marriage, and that is very near: *Can a maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire?* (3) Christ hath provided changeable Raiment, and divers sorts of rich and precious Ornaments for his Bride, and shall she not get them on? we must not think it is enough in order to a meetness for Christs coming, to have only on the Robe of Justification, but also the Garment of Sanctification: *Take away (saith the Lord*

Jer. 2. 22

Lord

Lord) his filthy garments, and put upon him Change of Raiment; would you have only a title to Heaven, and not a meetness for it also? (4) Consider, that Believers are the Kings Daughter, and ordinary Garments and Ornaments will not become them: *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within.* (5) Would you not be a shame to your Father, nor to the whole heavenly Family, O then get compleatly ready. (6) Consider, what a long time Christ hath given us, and how long he hath waited to have us ready. (7) The Lord also hath given us all a strict Charge to be ready; *And be ye also ready, &c.* (8) It is his Expectation, he looks to see us all ready on the Marriage-day, and such who are not, he will not admit to enter into the Wedding Chamber. (9) God hereby will be honoured, and it will also tend to the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to our own Honour likewise, since he hath been at so great Charge to provide such noble and rich Ornaments for us, to have them all on upon the Marriage-day, that his Riches and Glory in his Saints may shine forth. (10) And by this means we need not fear any evil that may come upon the World, no Judgments, nor be afraid to die. (11) This also will hasten (to speak after the manner of men) the Bridegrooms coming; he only waits to have all his Elect ready. (12) Moreover by this means we shall be put upon an earnest desire and longing for his Appearance, such that are ready, may say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* (13) Consider, in what Glory the Bridegroom will appear, how richly and gloriously he will be clothed and adorned, ought not there to be in some Degree a Proportion or Suitableness between the Grandure of the Queen with that of the King. (14) Sinners hasten to be ready for Hell, or to be damned, and shall not we be ready for Heaven and Salvation? It may be feared that we are not yet ready, and perhaps know it not; therefore be exhorted to look in the Glass: you Virgins look in the Glass, see whether you are every way compleatly dressed, and all things on in a right manner; our Dressing-glass is Gods Word, and by looking into that, and then viewing ourselves, we may see whether we are ready or not. But let us be sure to take a full sight, and not only a cast, and be gone.

Terror. This may be cause of great Terror to all the foolish Virgins, tho Christ tarries so long, yet when he comes they will not be ready.

Comfort. You Believers, never fear if you are sincere Christians, Christ will not come before you are ready.

All Gods Elect shall be ready,

1. Because they were all chosen to Salvation: First to believe, and thro Faith

to eternal Life, and not ordained to Salvation without Holiness, but chosen to believe:

And as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed; And as they are chosen to believe, so to be holy also: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of World, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.* None (saith Mr. Loveday) are chosen but such that are ready: now the Apostle saith, we are chosen to be holy or without blame, and what is that but to be ready, our being ready is not the cause of our being chosen, but our being chosen is the cause of our being ready.

2. Because all Gods Elect have a place prepared for them in Heaven; shall a place be prepared for them, and they not be prepared for that, or shall there be one empty place in Heaven: Certainly, God hath not prepared places for such that he never designed to prepare for those places.

3. Because all the Elect are bought or purchased with a dear price; *to be redeemed from all iniquity.* Redemption is from sin as well as from wrath, and shall Christ die to redeem one Soul from sin that shall never be actually redeemed? his Spirit was as well purchased to sanctify us, as his Righteousness to Justify us, and shall the holy Ghost fail in his Work and Office? doth the Love of the Father in electing, the Love of the Son in dying, exceed the Love of the Spirit in renewing and sanctifying? and yet all one and the same God in Essence? This cannot be.

4. Because Christ hath prayed and desired of the Father, that all he gave him, may be with him where he is, and behold his Glory.

5. Because Christ shall not have an imperfect Body; now all the Elect are Members of his mystical Body, and therefore the weakest or smallest Member shall not be wanting.

6. Because the Covenant and Promises of God are sure, and eternal Life is promised to every one that believeth; nay, *he that believeth on him hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation.* Of this they have a sure and certain hope; *and hope maketh not ashamed, &c.*

7. Because God will perform that good Work he hath begun; *Paul was confident of this, and what cause have any in our days to doubt of it—He that laid the first stone, will lay the top-stone, crying Grace, Grace unto it.*

8. Come, my Brethren, our Lords Design in his Death shall not be frustrated, no no; see what Paul saith: *As Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it—that he might sanctify, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,—that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such*

Act. 13. 48.

Eph. 1. 4.

See Love. day on the Talleants.

Joh. 14.

Tit. 2. 14.

Joh. 5. 24.

Heb. 6. 18,

19, 20.

Rom. 5. 5.

Phil. 1. 6.

Eph. 5. 26,

27.

such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Every Believer shall be thus presented by our Lord when he comes; shall the Promises of God fail? God forbid; well, what of them? hath he not said, *When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in Glory—and that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

Col. 3. 4.
1 Joh. 3. 1.
2.

Lamentation. Alas! poor sinners, how unprepared and unready are you for Christ's coming! what will you do, that know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? how will you stand when he appears in *Flames of Fire*, for so he will come upon all ungodly sinners and unbelievers.

2 Thess. 1.
8.

SERMON XXV.

Matth. XXV. 10.

And the door was shut.

FROM hence note,

Doct. The door of Heaven will be shut against all formal Professors, as well as against all prophane sinners.

I shall briefly do two things.

1. Shew you what may be denoted by shutting the door.
2. Shew you against whom the door shall be shut.

What
Christ's
shutting
the door
denotes.

Luk. 13. 25

1. 'Tis said Jesus Christ will rise up and shut the door: *When once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the door, &c.* This no doubt signifies the Wrath of the Son of God, the Wrath of the Lamb will then come, he will shew his Displeasure against all foolish Professors in that day, by rising up himself to shut the door against persons that knock. What! O then be sure he is offended, and is enraged against such persons; and this certainly denotes, I say, the great Wrath of the Lord Jesus Christ against those sinners.

2. It signifies that the day and Kingdom of Christ's Patience is expired and then ended for ever; the day of Grace will last till all the Elect are called, but then there will not be one of them wanting, and so no offers of Grace to sinners any more for ever at that day: Now a great door is opened, (the Lord grant it may be an effectual one,) but then it will be shut.

3. It signifies that no false Professor, or no unrenewed or unsanctified person, or that no unclean thing shall or can enter into that holy place, or have an Entrance into the Presence of Christ and his glorified Saints; tho they may remain or be among them in the Church militant, yet they shall have no place among them in the Church Triumphant.

4. *My Brethren*, this refers to that general shutting the door; there is a particular and a general shutting the door: God often-times shuts the door of Grace against some sinners, after they have abused his patience here in this World; (as he shut the door against the unbelieving Jews, and Wrath came upon them to the uttermost;) but the door here may be opened to some, tho it may be shut against others: But at that day it will universally be shut, and never be opened again.

5. It denotes that after death there is no means of Grace, no Gospel to be preached, and that it is impossible then for any to believe or to repent, because the night is come upon sinners, in which no man can work, the Spirit being utterly withdrawn for ever, it shall strive no more with any man.

Joh. 9. 4.

Secondly. *Who shall the Door be shut against?*

Ans. Against all prophane persons, or notorious sinners: *Without are Dogs, Whoremongers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lie;* that is, without the gate of Heaven, such shall not be let into the holy City, for another gate will be opened for all such who lived and died in open Prophaneness, for they shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Rev. 22. 15

Against

whom the

door shall

be shut.

Rev. 21. 8

2. *All Unbelievers and Misbelievers*, or whosoever do not truly or savingly believe in Jesus Christ. For, *my Brethren*, tho some are not openly wicked, but seem to hate gross and abominable Prophaneness, yet being unbelieving, and making light of Christ out of love to this World, or have not a right Faith in him, the door will be shut against them also: *Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* The Fearful and the Unbelieving are by the holy Ghost put together, as such that the door of Heaven shall be shut against, and the door of Hell be opened unto: and against all carnal Worldlings and covetous Persons, or such who have made the World or their Belly their God.

Joh. 8. 24

Rev. 21. 8

3. All Hypocrites, or loose, proud, foolish and vain Professors: This sort are particularly here mentioned, to warn such that are Members of Churches in the latter days (especially) to take heed of their

their state and condition, lest they have the door shut against them at the great day.

And against all Apostates. 4. All *Apostates* or Backsliders, who die in Apostacy, together with all *Impostors*, who have cast off the true Faith, either in respect had to Christ (the immediate Object of Worship) or any essential Principle of the Gospel, or of the Worship of God it self; embracing most abominable Errors and Heresies; for such *bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

2 Pet. 2. 2. 5. Even all that die without Union with Christ, and Regeneration: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

Mat. 22. 12. Lastly, The door will be shut against all that have not got on a Wedding-Garment: This is signified in another Parable. *Friend, how camest thou hither, not having a Wedding Garment? and he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness. And such in the Church that have no true Faith in Christ, have not the Wedding-Garment, and so the door will be shut upon them.*

Afterwards came also the other Virgins, saying Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.

These words close this Parable; it appears the *foolish Virgins* came too late.

Afterwards, that is when the door was shut.

Note from hence,

Doct. *That tho the foolish Virgins cry Lord, Lord, yet in that day all will be to no purpose, they shall be repulsed, because Christ knows them not; Prayers nor Tears will avail any thing in that day.*

In the Explanation of this Proposition,

1. I shall shew the purport of these words; *Lord, Lord.*

2. Shew what those words do denote, *Open to us.*

3. Shew why the foolish Virgins are so importunate to have the door opened.

4. Shew in what respect Christ may be said not to know them.

5. Apply it, and so conclude with this Parable.

What Opening may denote. 1. Their saying, *Lord, Lord*, may signify that Hypocrites shall confess to their shame, and to the glory of God, that Jesus Christ is Lord; they call him Lord, but cry not *Abba Father*, but their confidence no doubt will then be much abated: Before they did not only call Christ *Lord*,

but also called God *Father*, but we hear nothing of that in their Prayer now.

2. This title they give to Christ, may signify that Knowledge they had of the Person of Christ, the glory that then our Lord will appear in, will convince all the wicked that Christ is Lord; he may be known by the Crowns on his Head.

3. It may also signify that they know, and shall in that day know it is Christ's Prerogative to open the door of Heaven, none but he hath the Power and Right to let men into Heaven; they cry not to Paul, nor to Peter, nor to the Virgin Mary to open the door, but to Christ himself, who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens.—The blind Papists then will no more invoke the Saints, they will see their abominable Idolatry then, and be ashamed and confounded for ever, and must suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire, for giving that divine Adoration to Saints, that belongs to God alone.

4. They perhaps call him *Lord*, because they thought they were his Servants and Disciples; and indeed they were looked upon as such, and called the Servants of Christ, tho in that day they will appear to be wicked and sloathfull, or deceitfull Servants; yet it is common for disobedient Servants to say to their Master, *Lord, Lord*: Besides, they were not brought upon their Trial yet, were not judged and condemned.

5. Our Lord no doubt by these words *The foolish Virgins will* discovers how sad the state of all false Professors will be in that day: O what bitter cries and doleful lamentations will they make, when they see the door of Salvation, the door of Heaven shut against them; Lord open to us! Ah Lord open to us! O what wilt thou shut us out of thy presence? Lord have pity! But Christ shews all such prayers and tears will signify nothing to such who come too late, or delay the great work of Preparation to die, or to meet Jesus Christ.

6. It may signify that some shall pray to him then, and own him to be God, who would not pray to him, but denied his Deity before; they shall then cry, O thou art *Jehovah*, thou art God blessed for ever, now we believe, we were blasphemers, and have degraded thy glorious person; we are convinced of our sin now, and therefore on thy Name blessed Jesus we call, and to thee we cry, *Lord, Lord*; but then it will be too late; they who have denied his Godhead, and contemned his Power, and defaced his Glory, must perish for ever.

7. These words may denote the agony they will be in, and the earnestness of their desires for admittance; *Lord, Lord, open presently; Lord save us, O shut us*

O o o o o

not

not out, we perish, we begin to sink, Hell is ready to open her mouth and to swallow us up; O quickly open Lord, or we are lost and undone for ever.

Secondly, What do these words denote, *Open to us?* what would they have?

What foolish Virgins desire by crying Open to us.

1. *Ans.* They desire that Christ would own them to be his; as the wise Virgins had look'd upon them to be Saints or true Believers, so they beg that the Lord Jesus would acknowledge them to be also, they having professed themselves to be his servants, and had obeyed his Precepts, having been Baptized in his Name, and receiv'd into his visible Church, and had often broke Bread with his People, and having tasted of the heavenly Gift, and born shame and reproach for his Name sake; but alas none of this will do, their hearts not being right with God, pride, vain-glory or self love being at the bottom of all.

2. That they might be entertained in the Marriage Chamber, and have the sweet smiles of the blessed Bridegroom, and be embraced in his Princely Arms, and not behold his frowns and angry Countenance, but be happy in Heaven for ever.

3. It may denote that great sense they had of the dismal Consequences of an utter denial of his favour at that day: Lord open now, or we are eternally ruined; now before the door of grace is shut: if Christ opens not to them now to day, there may be hope he may to morrow, but then they will see that is the last time of any hopes being left them for ever; if no door be opened then, it will be shut to all eternity.

4. It may denote how unwilling the wicked will be to go to Hell, or what fearful horror will seize upon them, fearfulness with a witness then shall surprize the hearts of Hypocrites, such who fly not now to Christ, who hath born Gods wrath for poor sinners, must then for ever bear it themselves, and this they then shall have the full apprehension of upon their hearts, and therefore they cry, Lord, Lord, open to us.

Thirdly, *What should be the reason the foolish Virgins should be so bold and Importunate with the Lord Jesus Christ?*

Why the foolish Virgins are so bold to desire the opening the door.

Ans. It may be occasioned through that Ignorance and blindness that had taken hold of them, and which abode with them to the last; they were deceived, and saw not fully their desperate state, tho by finding the door shut they might have great cause to conclude they were none of Christs approved Servants.

2. Perhaps their being Virgins, or not being defiled with Idolatry, nor guilty of gross sins, or of open prophaneness, might make them somewhat bold and confident, having had fellowship with the visible

Church, and often (as I hinted) eat and drunk in Christs presence, and may be some of them had prophesied or preached in his Name, (as some we find will say in that day.)

3. Or perhaps they may know some were admitted in, who they might think were more unlikely than themselves: Lord, hast not thou receiv'd into the Wedding Chamber such and such, why we know they were men of as many great Infirmities as we, they grieved thy Ministers as well as we, and exposed thy Name to Reproach as well as we. *My Brethren*, a sincere Believer may be guilty of as many humane frailties, or of unbecoming practices (in their outward lives) as some Hypocrites, but their Hearts are right with God in the main.

David was a man that was guilty of very great Enormities, but he being a *Man after Gods own Heart*, none of his sins were cast in his face, but those foul and abominable acts of wickedness in the case of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah the Hittite*. Where there is sincerity of Heart, God overlooks many great and grievous sins, tho not without his bringing them to Repentance for them, and helping them by Faith to plead the Blood of the Cross for the pardon of them.

4. Consider and well observe the matter of their Request; Lord, we beg no outward Mercy of thee, nor to be indulged in any sin; but yet we find not they desired grace to change their Hearts, but would enter in without a proper meetness. Alas, without a true right or title to Heaven, and a suitable meetness, there will be no entering into that holy place; all that they desire now at last is but to be saved.

5. May be their melting frame might make them hope to find Mercy; they pleading with sighs, tears and bitter cries, may think that might move the heart of a tender and bleeding Jesus, they knowing what bowels and pity he had shewed to undone sinners; but they came not to him untill the day of Grace and his patience was gone. Christ may say, You seek me now early, but it is in the hour of your calamity, *when I called you refused*; and were you not told that you should in the day of your distress call upon me, but I would give you no answer, and that then you should seek me, but not find me: The Lamb-like nature or carriage of the blessed Jesus in that day towards Sinners will be gone, and he will appear like a Lion.

6. Consider the manner of their deportment, they make *supplication*; they do not seem to press in, or offer to force an entrance, but only stand and knock, and intreat for admittance, and plead not their deserts, but beg for Mercy.—

But

But may not our blessed Lord say, The Day of your Visitation you did not improve, the Merits of my Blood you did not apply; you desired Grace to be saved, but not to glorifie me, and to have communion with me:—You only sought and now seek self-preservation, now you can't sin any more as you have done, nor enjoy the things of the World you cannot longer, or have your Riches and your earthly pleasures, and now you would be saved; *Go ye cursed, I know you not.*

See how reverent they seem to be, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; we confess thy Authority, thy Sovereignty, it lies in thy own power, if thou please thou canst save us, and deliver us from Gods terrible wrath, that begins to take hold of us; but nothing will avail any Sinner then, it is vain to plead for Mercy when the day of Mercy is gone and for ever ended.

Fourthly, What doth the Lord mean when he says, *I know ye not*?

What meant by Christ saying I know ye not.

Hos. 5.3.

1 *Ans.* I answer first Negatively, it doth not signifie that Christ knew not who they were, or was ignorant of them; no, he is God, and knows all men, all things, all hearts, there is nothing that he knows not. *I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me.* Christ knows the hypocrisy of their Hearts, their states, their thoughts and their fears.

Joh. 10. 27, 28.

Mat. 7.23.

2/y, In the Affirmative. (1.) The Lord Jesus did not know them to be his Sheep. *I know my Sheep, and they follow me:—The Lord knows who are his, &c.* (2) He knows them not so as to approve of them; he will say, *I never knew you*,—that is, I never approved of you. (3) Knowledge sometimes refers to love and affections; it is all one as if Christ should say, I love you not, you are not the Objects of my affections, you are none of them that were given to me; *he that loveth God, is known of God, that is beloved of God.* (4) Knowledge is sometimes taken for intimate Communion, and they are such that never had this Knowledge of Christ, nor Christ of them.

APPLICATION.

1. See the End and woful state of all formal and unsound Professors, they will at the last day be all disowned by the Lord Jesus Christ. O what signifieth the Approbation of Men, if we have not the Approbation of God, or are not known or approved of by Jesus Christ? Many go for Saints on Earth, who will not be found Saints in the great day.

2. We may infer from hence the dismal state of all prophane Sinners; for if many Professors who escaped the gross pollution of sin and open wickedness, and performed many duties of Religion, shall

be shut out of Heaven at the last day, what will become of notorious and abominable transgressors, as Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Thieves, Idolaters, and all carnal Worldlings?

Obj. *But perhaps some may say, doth not this place shew the Soul is mortal? for if the Soul was Immortal, these persons knew they were damned, the Judgment of God being passed upon them; and how is it then that they at that day are said to plead for mercy?*

Ans. (1) These persons may be such that shall be found in the visible Church alive in the Body at the time when Christ comes, and doth not refer to such that were raised from the dead.

The foolish Virgins strictly may refer to such that are alive when Christ comes.

(2) For such that are dead, that dyed not in Christ, shall not be raised when our Lord first appears, or with those that sleep in Jesus.

(3.) The state of the Body in which the wicked shall be raised, having not their Bodies changed and made like Christs glorious Body, will discover their state to them, besides the horrid guilt they will find in their Consciences, which will lye heavy upon them.

(4.) All that die in their sins pass a particular Judgement when they die, and that makes a clear discrimination of their future state.

(5.) Some think this may refer to Christs coming at the founding of the seventh Trumpet, and not to his personal appearance: For the day of Grace to some may then end, tho to others it may then begin.

(6.) But in the last place, pray (once again) remember that Parables run not always on all four, but have their disparities. The scope and main design therefore of our Saviour in these words ought chiefly to be observed, which is to shew that when he comes, all cries, tears and prayers of Unbelievers and Hypocrites, will be fruitless, the door will be shut against them for ever in that day, and they shall be utterly disowned; and this is to excite all the Members of the visible Church not to neglect the present time, but prepare for the Coming of our Lord.

3. I infer it is a very dangerous thing for Professors or ungodly Sinners to delay to provide Grace for themselves before the door is shut; some it is to be feared will not regard what is laid before them, and thus press'd upon their Consciences, untill they cry out when 'tis too late, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* Alas, Christ now says, *Open to me, and you will not, and how Just will it be in him not to open to them in that day.*

4. I infer, that the Lord Jesus is not so made up of Mercy, but that he is Just

as well as merciful, he being God all the Perfections of the Godhead are in him, and when Mercy is turned into Fury, who can stand before him? We read of the great day of the *Wrath of God and of the Lamb.*

5. We may also infer, that the false Professors, or foolish Virgins are in as bad a Condition as prophane sinners, if not worse: Certainly, their Condemnation will be very great, they *must dwell* *Isa. 33. 14. with devouring Fire, and with everlasting burning.*

6. We infer likewise, that some awakenings will not profit many Persons, because they sleep in a secure graceless state too long; the foolish Virgins were awakened, but Christ came upon them before they were provided with Oyl. Moreover, that some Preparations and Endeavours after Grace are in vain, and that many will meet with sad Disappointments at the last day who thought themselves in a good Condition.

7. Also we may infer, that such that come to Christ too late for Grace, will come too late to him for Glory; and many will come to have the Life of Glory, that refused to come to have the Life of Grace.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh, ver. 13.

That is, neither the day nor hour of Christ's coming to us by death, nor his coming to Judgment at the last day, and therefore we ought to watch and be ready.

The Uncertainty of the precious day of the Lords coming is mentioned by himself, as a Motive to be ready, also the nearness of it: this was pressed by the Apostles also as an Argument to Watchfulness, and if that was a Motive to them, much more to us, to watch and be ready, since we have so many of the signs of the last days upon us; and sad it is no more enquiry is made by Ministers, who are *Few Ministers inquire in these days about the end of the world.* Watchmen, into the Prophecies relating to the fall of *Babylon*, and the sounding of the *seventh Trumpet*, and the signs of the Times; because all have been mistaken in many things touching this matter, who have wrote of them, some despair of ever attaining to the certain Knowledge of the time of the End of the Wonders, and therefore will not search; as if Christ had left those mystical Numbers on Record for no other Reason but to amuze the Hearts of his People: no, certainly it is that such who have Wisdom, might understand and give Warning to his People to be ready.

But at present I shall say no more, but thus close with this Parable.

The Parable of the Talents opened.

SERMON XXVI.

MATTH. XXV. 14, 15, &c.

For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a Man travelling into a far Country, who called his own Servants, and delivered unto them all his goods.

I. Shall open the Design of our Lord Christ in this Parable (as I have endeavoured to do in speaking unto all other already opened.)

2. Consider and explain all the parts thereof.

3. Raise several Propositions or Points of Doctrine from the principal Matter contained therein, and distinctly prosecute them.

The Scope of this Parable. First, Open the Scope and Design of our Lord herein.

I. It is no doubt to stir up all his Ser-

vants and Disciples to Watchfulness.

II. To provoke them to the uttermost of their Power, to improve all sorts of Gifts, Grace and Endowments they have received.

III. To take his Disciples off from an Expectation of a present, visible, glorious Kingdom; for they no doubt did (for some time) expect a different Kingdom at the coming of the *Messiah* than that which they found to be the purpose of his *first coming*. I must go (as if our Lord had said) a long Journey into

a far Countrey for to receive my Kingdom, and it will be a great while before I return in all my Glory, and to set Crowns upon your Heads.

IV. His Design also herein is to shew that we have nothing of our own, but what we and all men have, is given unto us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. To shew that as all men have received some Talent or another from God, so he expecteth, and requires the careful and due Improvement of them to his own Glory, and that according to our Improvements shall our Rewards of Grace be.

VI. To shew that the Non-improvement of the least Talent God hath given, us, will be the final cause of the Condemnation of the sons of men. So much to the Scope.

The chief parts of this Parable are,

1. To shew what is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. Who this man is that is said to go into a far Country.
3. What may be meant by his Servants.
4. What by his Journey.
5. What may be meant by the Talents.
6. What by his returning again.
7. And what by his calling them unto account.

The parts opened.
See Pools Annotations on this Parable.

First, The Kingdom of Heaven is like, &c. Here (as our late Annotators observe) the Kingdom of Heaven is the Oeconomy of Gods Providence in the Gospel Dispensation.

Is as a man travelling into a far Country.

By the man travelling into a far Country, is meant our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord Treasurer, and the Dispenser of all the Father hath, or doth bestow upon the children of men.

Who called his own Servants.

By his Servants some think are only meant the members of the visible Church; but I see no Reason to restrain the Sense so, but that more generally all men may be hereby comprehended, both the godly and ungodly, or those in, and those out of the pale of the visible Church.

All men are called Christs Servants.

1. For all men may be called the Servants of Christ, he is Lord of all, tho most of the sons of men are unfaithful Servants to him.

2. All men receive all things whatsoever they have, or do possess from Jesus Christ; and every thing is the Fruit or Effect of his purchase, or of his Mediation, and they are either given in a way of Mercy, or Judgment; he gave all men their beings, their Souls, and the Faculties of their Souls, their Riches, their Possessions, their time, their Strength, and their dayes upon the Earth.

3. Moreover all men must be accountable unto our Lord Jesus Christ; for all they have or do enjoy at the last day.

Secondly, Yet more especially by the Servants here may be meant, the members of the visible Church, or such who are called into his House.

1. For these in an especial manner may be called his own Servants, they being called by his Word and Ministers into his Service, to labour in his Vineyard.

2. Because such do in an especial manner profess that he is their Lord and Master, or that they are his, and no more their own.

3. They are his by the Fathers free Donation, (tho not all) The Father gave them me. Joh. 17. 2.

4. His by Purchase: Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the Servants of men; 1 Cor. 7. do not serve your lusts to please wicked men, or serve men in disobeying your great Master, who purchased you with his own Blood.

5. They may be said to be his Servants as being hired by him, which hiring denotes his wining their Hearts over to him in love to serve him, tho may be some had an Eye to something else, viz. they pretend to serve him, but it is out of by-ends; 'tis more to serve themselves than to serve Jesus Christ.

6. They that are sincere, may be called his Servants by way of Resignation of themselves to him, and to his Service.

Travelling into a far Country.

By the Journey into a far Countrey is meant no doubt Christs going to Heaven, or being absent as to his bodily presence from his People on Earth, until he comes again at the last day.

And delivered to them his Goods, &c.

1. Some would have these Talents intend only common Gifts, exclusive of Christs special saving Grace, but for what Reason they so take them I know not. What the goods are that Christ delivered to his Servants.

2. Some men have had strange Apprehensions about these Talents; one thinks the Ten Commandments are meant hereby; others the five Books of Moses, others the five Senses.

(1) But doubtless the Talents may be considered more generally, (as the Servants may intend all men) 1. The Soul and all its Faculties, Judgment, Wit, Conscience, the Affections, Memory, and all the Powers and Passions of the Soul, with all Natural Habits, humane Endowments, and acquired parts, Learning, Knowledge, and Means of Knowledge, together with Riches, Honour and Dignity, &c. for these may all be called Christs Goods, and are as Talents given by him to be improved to his Glory and to their own Good.

(2) Also by some of these Talents may be meant those Spiritual Gifts, which when Christ ascended up on high, he gave to men. Eph. 4. 8.

P P P P P

men.

men. For evident it is, the great Lord divideth his Goods to his Servants (as our *Annotators* note) unequally, according to his own good Pleasure and Sovereignty; and that not only natural Light, Knowledge and Abilities, but also Riches and Honours, &c. and Spiritual Gifts also; and some have more, and some less than others.

(3) And shall we think that the chiefest of all Christs Goods are not here at all meant, I mean that great Gift and Talent of special and saving Grace; for doth not these Servants among others comprehend Christs own beloved domestick Servants, and did he not give to them this choice part of his Goods, which they are to improve with all Faithfulness? why should any once suppose this Gift or Talent not to be here comprehended?

(4) The holy Gospel and the sacred Doctrine thereof, with all Seasons and gracious Opportunities, Spiritual Illuminations, Convictions and Operations of the Spirit may be also comprehended by these Talents, or by some of them.

(5) Spiritual Priviledges, Dignities, and Prerogatives, which some men in the Church receive from Christ above others, may also be hereby intended; some are *Pastors, Teachers, Deacons*, some are made Rulers in the House of God, and are not these Talents given to them to improve to the Glory of Jesus Christ, and Profit of his Church.

(6) The holy Sacraments and all the Ordinances and Discipline of the House of God are also glorious Talents, with an able and painful Ministry; *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas*, all are yours, all as rich and glorious Talents are given unto you.

Quest. Are not all the Talents of the same Kind and Species, tho some had more, and some less, they are called Pounds, also the Lords Goods, and his Money?

Luk. 19.

12.
The Talents
not all of
the same
Species

Ans. The *Arminians*, (who seem to make great use of this Parable, to confirm their corrupt Notions) would have all the Talents of the same Nature or Quality; viz. that they comprehend such Grace as is sufficient, being improved to save every man and woman in the World, and that eternal Life is entayld to the Improvement of these Talents; which Error I shall detect before I close with this Parable.

For tho the Non-improvement of the one Talent is the cause of his Damnation, who had it given to him, yet the Improvement of it could not, cannot save him.

Reasons to
prove the
Talents are
not all of
the same
Species

These Talents certainly are, all of the same Species and Kind, neither can they be supposed so to be; provided by the Servants are meant all Mankind; For

1. Have the *Heathens*, the *Indians*, or *Pagans*, the same Talents as to Species with those Talents Christ hath given to true Christians? is the *Sun*, Moon and Stars, and Works of Creation and Providence, or the natural Light that is in their Consciences, (or Law of God in their Hearts,) of the same Nature or Kind with the Gospel and glorious Ministration thereof?

2. Is common Grace of the same kind with special and saving Grace?

3. If all the Talents which are given unto all men, were of one and the same Quality, it would follow then that God hath no special Love to some men more than unto others, which is directly contrary to his blessed Word.

Did not God love *Jacob* more and better than he loved *Esau*, and gave him Talents that were of a far more excellent Nature than those which he gave to *Esau*? and did not God love the Offspring of *Abraham*, or the Children of *Israel* better than all the People that then lived on the Earth; and also give to them quite different, and more choice Talents than he gave unto any other People under that Dispensation?

4. Doth not *Paul* say, *Having then* Rom. 12. Gifts differing according to the Grace that is given to us? Grace differs from other Spiritual Gifts, and tho some Gifts may not differ in their Quality in one respect, yet true and saving Grace is a more excellent way, or far exceeds all Gifts howsoever different they may seem to be in themselves. ult. Chap. 13. 1, 2, 3.

5. If all men have received the same Talents with true Believers; then all Mankind have received the holy Spirit, which our Lord Jesus Christ says the *World* cannot receive; and *Paul* saith, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them. Joh. 14. 17. 1 Cor. 2. 14.

6. If the Talents which Christ hath given to all men, are of one and the same Nature or Kind, then all men have received true grace, as well as true Believers; and if so, then it will follow all people shall be saved, for I challenge all men in the World to give an Instance of any one Person that received true Grace, who hid it, or totally neglected the Improvement thereof, and so perished eternally; and if a man may receive saving Grace, and yet be damned, let it not be called saving Grace any more.

7. If all the Talents are of one & the same Kind, and Salvation depends upon the Improvement of these Talents, then eternal Life is not of the free grace of God, nor the gift of God, but it is of mans free will, or wrought out as the Reward of mans own Labour, Pains, and Improvements, and so he who is saved hath wherewith

Rom. 3.27 to glory or boast, but in our Salvation all boasting is utterly excluded.

I must needs confess (could I believe with some men) that none of these Talents do consist of saving Grace, or comprehend the holy Spirit and Graces thereof, then they may be all one Kind, namely natural, acquired, or common gifts, which I call one and the same as to quality (tho they may differ in some respects) because carnal men and Hypocrites, or such that perish, may receive them; for howsoever gifts or talents may differ, yet I distinguish them under these two Heads, viz. Common and Special, or spiritual Gifts and saving Grace.

But as I have newly hinted, it may seem strange that our Lord at this time, when he speaks of giving forth his Treasure, his Goods, his Money to the Sons of Men, upon his Ascension or going to Heaven, should not mean or refer in the least to his chiefest Goods or Treasure in these Talents, which he is said to give, and promised to give when he went away; therefore I am of the same Judgment or Opinion in respect to these Talents, with our late Annotators: Take what he says.

"I see no Reason (saith he) to restrain these gifts to such that flow from Christ as Mediator, but rather chuse to interpret it generally of all the gifts of God, whether of Providence or Grace, whereas ver. 15. it is said this man divided his Goods to his Servants inequally, to one five, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several Ability. It signifies only Gods unequal Distribution of his Gifts to the Children of men, according to his own good Pleasure, which is true both concerning natural parts, as Wit, Understanding, Judgment, Memory, as concerning those the Heathen call good things, as Riches, Honours and Dignities, under which Notion also come all acquired Habits or Indowments, such as Learning, Knowledge, Moral Habits, &c. which tho' acquired are Gifts, because it is the same God who gives us Power to get Wealth, as Moses speaks, who gives men Power also to get Knowledge, and upon Study and Meditation to comprehend the Nature and Causes of things—or the Gifts of more special Providence, or distinguishing Grace, &c. They bring in special divine and distinguishing grace are here comprehended, &c.

And after a long time the Lord of those Servants comes to reckon with them, ver. 19.

By this great Mans coming again to reckon with his Servants, is meant our Lords coming at the end of the World to judge all Mankind, both the quick and the

dead. Christ, my Brethren, will come again, he will return, tho the time seems long; this denotes his Descension, as his going a long Journey into a far Countrey, denoted his Ascension up into Heaven: This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. That is,

- 1. Visibly: Every Eye shall see him.
- 2. In a Cloud.
- 3. By his own Power.
- 4. With the like Majesty.
- 5. With the same Body, tho more glorious, for he shall come in the Glory of the Father with all the holy Angels.

And then he will reckon with these Servants, (i.e.) he will call them all to an Account about the Improvement, or the Non-improvement of those Talents given to them. Now, since the Scripture saith, all men shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to give an Account unto him; and here is no mention made of any that he will reckon with, but these Servants; I conclude, these Servants include, or comprehend all Mankind.

APPLICATION.

1. We infer from hence, that all good Gifts, or whatsoever any have received or do possess, they received it from the Lord Jesus Christ: What hast thou which thou hast not received? what of Natural or Spiritual Abilities, it is applicable to all good things, and 'tis according to Christs Gift, or his giving, that one man differs from another; if one hath saving Grace, saving Knowledge, or understands the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, it is because that Grace, that Light and Knowledge is given to him, which may not be given to another: Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. Many have the Gospel in the Notion, or History of it, and they can preach it to others; talk and discourse about it, but have no saving or experimental Knowledge of the mysterious Power and Efficacy of it upon their own Hearts: I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes. Even so Father, for so it seems good in thy sight. How absurd is it for any to affirm, all receive like Talents, as to their Nature or Quality, or that men may by Improvement of common light, and the Means of Grace God affords them, gain saving or special Grace; no no, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. God gives to every one according unto his own sovereign Will and Pleasure.

Act. 1. 11.

Rev. 1. 7.

1 Cor. 4. 7.

Mat. 13. 11

Matt. 11. 25, 26.

Rom. 9. 16

Act. 16.

True, God directeth men to improve all means of Light, Grace and Knowledge, but an Heart and Power to do it is as much the Gift of God as the Means it self, or else it is not God that makes the Difference which is in one from another; nor is it of Gods free Grace, but of mans free will: *God opened Lydia's Heart, that she attended upon what Paul preached.*

2. We infer, that some men receive not only more than others, but also that which is far better as to its Kind or Quality; some have more Riches, more Honours, greater Dignity, some receive more common Light and Knowledge, have larger Souls, or greater Capacities than others, and some have more Spiritual Knowledge, greater Spiritual Gifts, and some have more divine and special Grace; it is as God is pleased to give to every man.

3. We may also infer from hence, that such who do receive not only common gifts, common light and Knowledge, but also the special grace of God, they do carefully improve those Talents, tho not all with like Care and Faithfulness; for tho he that received the five, and he that received the two, are said proportionably to make Improvement, yet we are not to think thereby, ^{he} ~~He~~ call that are Faithful Servants, or that are true Christians, do with like Diligence, Care and Faithfulness acquit themselves; Parables thus run not on all four, yet it cannot be denied, that any Person who receives the Talent of saving Grace, utterly and finally neglecteth the Improvement thereof, so as to be found at the last day a wicked and slothful Servant; for then it would follow, that true Believers may totally and finally fall away from Grace, which is a grand Error for any to affirm.

Neither are we to conclude from this Parable, that always such who have most given to them, do make the best Improvement of them; for as common Experience proves the contrary, so our Saviour shews that some are faithful in the least, and others in the most.

4. We may also learn from hence, that according to the Nature and Quantity of those Talents, Jesus Christ is pleased to bestow upon all Persons, he expecteth their utmost Improvement of them, where he gives much the Improvement of much.

They that have store of earthly Riches, small Improvement of them is not sufficient, perhaps a Man of small parts, Knowledge and Ability, may be more useful, or do more good than he which hath received far greater parts, or more Knowledge and Abilities, and so may he that hath received but a small portion of earthly Riches, he may give more to the poor Saints, or to support the Ministry and common Interest of Christ, than some

who are very rich, or that have much of the World; and this indeed to our sorrow on the one Hand we have often seen, which as it is a high Commendation in the one sort, so it is a great Shame to the other: How did our Lord praise or commend the poor Widdow, who cast into the Treasure two Mites, even all her Substance, he declared that she had done more than them all, tho some of them might cast in great Summs out of their vast Stocks.

5. Moreover we infer, that he (or such) that received but one Talent, who did not improve that one, that one Talent could not be a Talent of saving Grace; because no man that ever did receive a Talent of saving Grace, ever proved a wicked and slothful Servant, and so perished for ever.

6. Object. *Did not the Lord design good to him to whom he gave but one Talent? and was he not capable to improve that one? if neither of these be granted, it will follow that he designed the greatest evil unto him?* ^{Improve it.}

1. Ans. I answer, No doubt but his Lord did design good to him, for God is good to all, he out of his common Goodness imparts his Blessings and good things to all men; the Sun and Showers that fall from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons are Blessings God bestows upon all Mankind, and this for their good, his tender Mercy is over all his Works.

But there is not like good things given to all, nor are all good things that God gives designed to the same end, nor do they proceed from him as the Effects of the same Love; certainly there was in God a more special and peculiar Love to some from everlasting than to others; and so his design in giving his Spirit, his Grace, his special Grace to some, was for a higher Good to them, than ever he designed in giving to others; the great Turk hath vast Dominions, Grandeur and Riches, and God gives men of the World their portion in this Life. Besides, who can frustrate God in his Designs and Purposes? but if God in giving the Gospel to many Thousands, designed absolutely to effect the Salvation of them all, but the wills of some complying not, his Design is frustrated, as if the will of men may contradict Gods Will in his absolute Designs and Purposes.

2. We readily grant, that he who receives but one Talent, may and ought to improve it, and shall be condemned for the Non-improvement thereof, he not being faithful in that which was least.

6. Yet this ought always to be granted, viz. that a Heart to improve each Talent, which God is pleased to give to any, is wholly from God, it is given to

as by him as much as the Talent it self: *For he worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* God worketh not only by suasions to gain our assent, but by a special Energy effecting what he would have us to do, in a victorious and efficacious manner, or powerfully inclining the wills of his Elect; for otherwise they would resist all the Motions of his Spirit, and all Arguments or Suasions would be as ineffectual, as a man may use to perswade a dead man to rise out of the Grave: God taketh away the Heart of stone, and gives a Heart of flesh, causing Light to shine out of Darkness, and so renewing the Will, and destroying the Enmity that is therein; by which it comes to pass we chuse that which is good, and attend upon the Word of God, and are helped to improve those Talents God hath given to us. It is not (as one observes) that man may only be able to will, and able to do, but God worketh in us both to will and to do, which connotes the very Act it self. Tho to will is our Act, as to live is our Life; *Lazarus* lived (after he was dead) and the Life he had was his Life, but Christ gave it to him in a supernatural and miraculous Manner; so we will, act and do by Virtue of the same almighty Power in all things that are truly and spiritually good.

Phil. 2. 13.

Ezek. 11. 19. Ch. 36. 26.

He that shall be so bold as to deny the Truth of this Proposition, shews no small Ignorance, because the Truth thereof (as to matter of fact) the whole World may daily see most evident before their Eyes, yet to put it out of doubt.

1. I shall endeavour clearly to prove this great Truth.

2. Give some Reasons why the Lord doth this.

I shall prove it: Pray did not God give more and better Talents unto *Abraham*, than he gave to multitudes in his days. also,

Did not the Lord give him more Light and Knowledge in divine things, than to thousands; the Generality of the World in his days had no more Knowledge of God so far as we can gather, but what the Light of natural Conscience by the help of the things of the visible Creation, and common Providences of God discovered to them: But God called him out of the Idolatrous World, and in a supernatural manner revealed himself unto him, and gave himself to him to be his God, and entered into Covenant with him and all his true Spiritual Seed, giving by free Promise an Assurance of Jesus Christ, who should be born of his Seed, and Eternal Life thro' the same blessed Jesus; was not this a different Talent in specie, better in quality, and more in quantity, than he gave to the rest of Mankind? For

God doth give to some men greater and more distinguishing gifts, and such that differ in kind from what others have.

1. Had not *Abraham* special Grace given to him, or the Faith of Gods Elect, which is a most precious thing in respect of the Nature thereof?

Did not God give him a special Interest in himself: *Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great Reward.* Did God give himself to all the People of the World in that sense in *Abraham's* days? No, none dare affirm, that he did give that Talent, that Promise, that Covenant, that Grace, nor that special Interest in himself, but to a few of his natural Seed, even to none of them, but the Elect that were among them only.

Gen. 15. 12

2. Did God give Christ or the Knowledge of Christ, (to come and to suffer death for his elect Seed) to all People then: *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it (saith our Lord) and was glad.* He saw my coming in the flesh, and my dying for his sins on the Cross, and the Publication of the Gospel in all Nations, that in me all that believe may be blessed.

Joh. 8. 56.

3. Did not God also give greater Talents, yea better in kind, and more in quantity, to all his natural Seed, than he gave to all other Nations and People of the Earth. For

1. Did not God enter into a legal, external and relative Covenant with *Abraham's* natural Seed, as such, and gave them

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SERMON XXVII.

MATH. XXV. 14, 15.

Who called his Servants, and delivered to them his Goods. &c.

WE have opened divers parts of the beginning of this Parable, and have shewed that the Talents are not all of one kind, or of the same Species; what tho Talents given out by a Lord to his Servants are all of one Species, all that ever wrote on Parables, confess they run not always so on all four, that in every thing there must be an exact Parity; for such who affirm that, will run into great Errors and Absurdities.

Parables often run not on all four.

But to proceed, from the Exposition I have given you the last day, I shall now proceed to note one or two Points of Doctrine, as necessarily rising therefrom.

Doct. That God doth not give to all men Talents alike, neither in respect of the Quality nor Quantity of them.

the Promise of the Land of Canaan, and the Rite of Circumcision to all his male Children that sprang from his loyns by Isaac, as a Sign or Token of that Covenant upon their performance of the federal conditions proposed to them, unto which they subscribed or restipulated, and ingaged to perform on their parts: for evident it is that the Covenant God made with his natural or fleshly seed as such, was upon mutual restipulation, they being obliged to discharge the federal Conditions, on pain of being cut off; which shews that Covenant made with them, as so considered, was not the Covenant of Grace, for that was only by free Promise, and only made to the true seed who were heirs of the special Promise, and could not be disinherited without Gods violation of his Word and Oath to Abraham, and to all them in him who were ordained unto Eternal Life, as the Apostle proves.

Heb. 6. 13,
14, 15, 16,
17, 18, 19,
20.

2. Did not God give to the natural seed of Abraham his holy and visible Worship, and constituted them his own visible Church, and gave them his Laws and Ordinances? were not these things the Lords Goods, or Talents given to them his Servants, and were not they different in nature, kind, or quality to all whatsoever he gave to any other people of the World at that time?

III. Did not God give to Isaac more, and better Talents, and quite different, or of a contrary species to those he gave to Ishmael? Did God give and confirm the Covenant of Grace to Ishmael, or give him his saving Grace, and the Promise of himself, which precious Talents he gave to Isaac? or did God give to Esau the same Talents in kind or specie which he gave to Jacob? the one had the Blessings of the fat things of the Earth, the other he gave the fat things of the Covenant of Grace, and of eternal Glory in Heaven.

The Jews or
people of
Israel had
Talents that
differed in
specie.

IV. And when we come to Moses days, did not God give to the whole people of Israel Talents different in kind to any he gave to the Gentile Nations? or doth not the true Church state and visible Worship of God, and all the Laws and Ordinances of God under that Dispensation, differ in kind from what the Heathen World received for near two Thousand Years?

Deut. 4. 8. What People have Laws and Statutes so righteous as this Law is? — Or what Nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto him, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? Were these Talents, given to Gods servants or no Talents? and if Talents, and the Lords Goods, how different were they from what any other people had!

Ps. 147.
19, 20.

He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments to Israel, — he hath not dealt so with any Nation,

as for his Judgments they have not known them: Praise ye the Lord.

Moreover, doth not Paul say upon this very account the Jews had the advantage of the Gentiles, viz. Because unto them were committed the Oracles of God. — And not only so (for we will admit the ten Commandments do not differ in kind to the Law or Light within, or Law of God written in the Hearts of all Mankind:) But unto them pertaineth the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, the Service of God, and the Promises. Sure many of these were different Talents, or of another kind to those the Gentiles had.

Rom. 3. 2.

Rom. 9. 4.

IV. Let us come unto the New Testament times: Pray did not our Lord give Talents of a quite different Nature to his Disciples, than any he gave unto others? and were they not quite of another kind, and of a far more excellent quality than what Christ gave to such who refused to be his Disciples? It is given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given: — And yet will any affirm the Talents to all men are of the same species, or kind?

2. Did not the Lord Jesus give the holy Spirit unto those Servants? or is the holy Ghost in its blessed saving Operations and Influences thereof given to all men? have all a spiritual vital Principle in them, or union with Christ? are all renewed and sanctified? The Spirit and the graces of the Spirit certainly are Talents given to some of Christs servants, even to all that are his faithful Servants, and are these the same in nature or quality with what is given in common to all men?

The holy
Spirit and
saving
grace are
Talents
given to
some.

V. To come to matter of Fact in our dayes.

1. Hath not God given quite different Talents to some Nations than what he hath at this present time given to others or to the Pagan, Mahometan, and Antichristian World? Have they the Gospel given to them as England hath? or is the Gospel no Talent given to some of Gods Servants? if a Talent, a great Talent, doth it not differ in specie to those Talents God hath given to the Heathen World? O what Nation hath such Light of the Gospel, such clear Knowledge of Christ, and of Gospel Truths and Mysteries? as also sweet and peaceable seasons of Worship, as well as the Gospel Church, and true Gospel Worship, and holy Ordinances.

England
hath Ta-
lents dif-
ferent from
most Na-
tions of the
World.

2. Moreover, doth not God give better Talents (excelling in their nature or quality) to some People in England and other Nations, than he gives to many who dwell here? All perhaps have the Gospel, but all have it not (in many parts and corners of this Nation) in that clear

Reve-

Revelation of it, as some Cities and Towns have of it. Besides, where the Gospel is clearly and powerfully preached, yet many have it but in Word only; and indeed none but the Elect have it in the Power of it; for if it is by the power of the Gospel coming upon mens Souls, the Elect are known from others; then what I say clearly follows: And that this is a great Truth, see what the ^{1 Thes. 1.} Apostle saith. *Knowing Brethren beloved, your Election of God — for our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in much assurance, &c.* By this Paul knew they were elected: Now is not that Divine power God puts forth upon the Souls of men a quite different thing, and a far greater blessing, than to have the Gospel in word only? Multitudes have the outward Word, but few have the inward power: Tho many have the Gospel of Grace, yet but a few have the Grace of the Gospel as a Talent given unto them.

VI. To fumm up the whole, to prove all men have not Talents of the same species, consider, God gives not himself, his Son, his Spirit, his saving Grace, Light and Knowledge unto all; God gives not a New Heart, Pardon and Justification, Adoption, Communion, Peace, true Consolation unto all; now since these are our Masters goods or Talents given to some, which so vastly differ from all other Talents whatsoever, I infer the Talents are not all of one species or kind. But to proceed.

Secondly, *I shall give you the Reasons of this, or shew you why God gives Talents that differ in specie or quality to others, to some Servants only.*

1. Because God loves some Persons better than others, shall one dare to say that God loved from Eternity all men alike, or that it is only for some mens doing well that causeth him to love them better than others; the consequences of such an Error all men may see are abominable.

But to prove this, that 'tis from his Love to some that he gives better things, and Blessings unto them. Pray what was the cause that Joseph gave to Benjamin a double Mess? was it not because he loved him better than his other Brethren? Even so God loves some with an Everlasting, with a special and peculiar Love. ^{Jer. 31. 3.} *Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with loving kindness I have drawn thee.* If God loved all Nations, or all persons in all Nations alike, no doubt but he would bestow like Talents of peculiar and special Blessings upon them, or if not the same in quantity, yet the same in kind or quality: why had Jacob different Blessings from Esau? is

it not positively said, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated?* And was it because Jacob had done something to deserve or procure the Love of God? No, *For the Children being not yet born, neither had done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.* Not of works, that is, not for any works foreseen in Jacob, but meerly because God loved him. And also why did God give those peculiar Talents to the people of Israel? The Lord sheweth, it was not ^{Deut. 7.} from any thing he saw in them, but ^{6, 7, 8.} because he loved them: He *loves* and ^{Rom. 8. 15.} *hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy.*

2ly. Because as God loved some with a special love, so them he also elected, or ^{Eph. 1. 4.} chose to be a holy People, or ^{Ordained} ^{Act. 13. 48.} *to Eternal Life*; this is the prime and efficient cause of all special favours and spiritual blessings any receive. *Whom he fore-* ^{Rom. 8.} *knew* (or approved of, or loved) *he pre-* ^{29, 30.} *destinated to be conformable to the Image of his Son — And whom he predestinated them he also called, &c.* These he gives the choicest and richest Treasure and Talents unto.

3ly. Because Jesus Christ dyed only to ^{Christ gives} ^{better gifts,} ^{choicer Ta-} ^{lents to some} ^{than to all,} ^{because he} ^{died for} ^{some and} ^{not for all.} save some, and not all People in the World. *His Name shall be called Jesus, because he shall save his People from their sins.* — His People, that is Gods Elect. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and it was for these he dyed; I lay down my life for my sheep.* He purchased the Church with his own blood: If God gave ^{Mat. 1. 21.} ^{Joh. 17. 6.} ^{Joh. 10. 15.} ^{Act. 20. 28.} Christ which is the greater gift for all men, then he would give the lesser gifts to all men, all should then have equal Talents in kind or quality, even all things tending to make them truly happy; this is the Apostles Argument: *For if when we were sinners we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life:* That is, through his Intercession, who obtains all grace, strength, and whatsoever his Elect want, and this he will give much more: What God give Christ to dye in the stead of all! what a gift is that! and will he not give the Gospel to multitudes of them, nor give his Spirit nor Faith to apply the Attonement! Sirs, according to *Arminian* Notions Paul was out, he was mistaken; God may be reconciled to all Mankind by the Death of his Son, he doth give the greater, but withholds the lesser: But see how our Apostle again confutes their Notion; *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* That is, all things that pertain to ^{2 Pet. 1. 3.} *life and godliness.*

If all spiritual Gifts and peculiar Talents were purchased at so dear a rate for all

all, all shall have them, because God is just and faithful; and will Christ give his Life to save such that he will not give his Spirit unto to renew them: what give a Million for an Estate, and not part with ten Pound to take it up.

+. If Christ paid every sinners debts, and bore the Wrath of God for them, or in their stead and room, it would not be just and righteous in God to let them perish in Hell to satisfy (if that could do it) divine Justice, and yet Justice fully satisfied before for all their sins, this is strange. I hope they do not deny the Satisfaction Christ made; was God only reconcileable by the death of his Son, who is it then, or what is it that reconciles him? is it the Creatures Repentance, Faith and Obedience? if so, the Creature hath great part of the Glory of his own Salvation, nor is sin so great an evil as the Word of God declares, if imperfect Repentance, Faith and Obedience can satisfy divine Justice, or reconcile sinners to God; but pray is not the making the Attonement one thing, and the Application of it another; we do not say any sinner is actually discharged without Faith or the Work of the Spirit in the Application of Christs Blood, but to say Faith satisfies or reconciles us unto God, is very absurd, and tends to degrade or lessen the Merits or Satisfaction of Christ.

The Spirit would apply Christs blood to all if Christ dyed to several.

5. Would not the holy Spirit work Grace in all, if Christ died for all, with an Intention to save all; the Love of the Father in Election, the Love of the Son in Redemption, and the Love of the holy Spirit in Application and Renovation, are of equal Extent, being but one and the same God.

4ly, All have not Talents alike, but some have not only more but better in kind or quality, because God acts only in a way of sovereignty in the distribution of his Talents, even according to the good pleasure of his will: *May I not do what I will with my own?* &c. Shall God have less Power to dispose of his Favours and

Mat. 20. 14 See the Parable opened of the Householder hiring Servants in his Vineyard.

rich Treasure than men have to distribute their Favours and Bounty? Must he because he will redeem Mankind, redeem the fallen Angels also? or because Christ died for some, must he die for all Adams Offspring? or because some have the Gospel preached to them, must all have it preached to them? must a rich man because he gives five Pounds a piece to a hundred Widdows, give as much to all Widdows in the whole Kingdom, or else be counted unjust?

But because I have more largely opened the Nature of Gods Sovereignty in speaking to that Parable, *Mat. 20. 12, &c.* I shall say no more to it here.

APPLICATION.

1. How doth this reprove them that foolishly affirm the Talents are all of one kind that God gives to men, because they may be so that a Lord may give to his earthly Servants, as if there were no Disparities in Parables: besides, to argue from a Parable remote (especially) from the Scope of it, shews great Weakness.

Obj. *But doth not this Parable say, The Lord gave to every man according to his ability?*

Ans. And what of this? doth it follow from thence, that every man hath like Spiritual Abilities to improve Spiritual Talents, as men may have to improve external Talents; this is to strain the Parable beyond the Scope of it also.

2. God gives to the Heathen Talents according to their Abilities to improve; are not they able to improve their Natural Light and Knowledge? (Some of them formerly seemed thus to do) and to such to whom God gives the Ministration of the Gospel, he requires Improvements according to their Light and Advantages. So to them that God gives special grace, he gives Assistance or Ability unto, to improve that grace.

Everyone hath Talents according to their Abilities to improve them, but I know no man that is dead is able to improve any Talent; and such who are Spiritually dead in sins, are not able to improve any Spiritual Talent to Gods glory, nor to his own Profit, until he is quickened by Jesus Christ. Men may act like men, and improve natural and external Powers, and shine in Morality, but no man can improve grace nor gracious Habits before grace is implanted in his Heart—and let no man say that God is obliged to give all men those divine Habits, or bestow his Spirit upon all, that all may have equal Abilities; as Christians, as they may in some sense be said to have considered as men: But more to this hereafter, when we come to that part of the Parable.

3. How doth this also tend to reprove such that attribute all to the will of man, and that all men may have eternal Life by improving those Talents God hath given to them, tho they never believe in Christ, nor know him, nor are born again; and that affirm, grace depends upon the Improvement of Nature, and that God will never bestow the greater Gift on such that improve not lesser gifts.

4. We may also infer, that all Improvements of the Talents of special grace, is as much of grace as the Talent or Stock it self, or that what we do, or will to do, is as much from God, (or by his Immediate Assistance) as Grace it self.

Obj.

Obj. But how can God be just if he act in a way of Sovereignty, and gives not to all alike?

1. *Ans.* Can any man be charged for bestowing his Favours, his gifts, and Bounty as he pleaseth?

2. God is just, because he is no mans Debtor, to whom is God obliged? Moreover, to deny his Sovereignty is to eclipse his Glory, and cast contempt upon his holy Majesty; is not his Word true? and doth not that say, *He hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

3. There was no constraint laid upon God, to save any man, and do not all deserve his Wrath for ever? why will God save man, and not fallen Angels? or, why us and not others?

4. All men naturally are undeserving Creatures, and therefore if God should cast off all Mankind, and not shew Mercy unto any, he would be righteous, and no man could charge him with Injustice, or for doing him any wrong; suppose that thousands of men should rise in Rebellion against their Lawful Sovereign, and conspire to dethrone, nay, murder him, and yet he should pardon some of them, and execute the rest, is he unjust in saving of a few, because he did not extend his Favour and Compassion unto them all?

5. God is just in his Distributions of his Favours to some only, and manifesting his Displeasure on the rest, because there are none who perish in their sins, that improved according to their abilities the Talents God gave unto them; for where is the Person that ever did to the uttermost of his Power live up to that Light, Knowledge and Abilities they received from the Lord?

6. Gods doing more for some than for others, makes not the state of such he passeth by worse than it was, (they were condemned before) tho it makes the state of those he shews Favour unto better; for did not God out of sovereign grace pluck some out of the Fire by his almighty Power, every Soul of man would have perished for ever.

Secondly, How should the Consideration of this raise our Hearts in Praises unto God, for casting our Lot in *England*, or in a Land where the blessed Gospel is preached; we might have been born in *India* or in *Turkey*, and trained up either in *Paganism* or *Mahometism*, or in some *Popish* Countreys, where nothing but Idolatry and Hellish Darkness predominates, and where the wretched People think 'tis their Duty to give divine Adoration to Idols, even to a *Wafcr Cake*.

But much more cause have Believers to

blefs the Lord, who hath given them to know the *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, and to work grace in their Hearts, or in giving his Spirit unto them, which he hath not given to many others, tho they have the Gospel preached unto them; therefore I may say as our Saviour did to his Disciples in the like case: *Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.* All the spiritual good we receive is alone an act of Gods sovereign Love and Favour to us, we cannot say it is because we did more than others, or deserved more than others, that God gives to us Two Talents, or five, and to others but one; it is as the great Lord pleaseth.

Thirdly, This therefore may reprove them that say, God loves all men alike; nay that he loved *Judas* as much as *Peter*, until by his sin he incurr'd his Displeasure. Was not *Peters* sin very great in denying his Master, and in swearing he did not know him? did he not deserve to be cast off for ever, as well as *Judas*? and was it not because of that special Love God bore to the one above the other, that one had Repentance given to him, and the other had not, but died in his sin, that he might goe to his own place? If *Peter* was upright hearted, and not the other, who gave him that Heart? Is not a new, a sincere and an upright Heart given of God? The Hearts of all men naturally are only evil and full of Hypocrisy, and did not God restrain Satan, would he not enter into every mans Heart, and stir them up to commit the highest Acts of wickedness?

4ly, Therefore in the last place, let us take heed who differ from others, to ascribe it wholly to the free grace of God; for what have we which we have not received, and if we have received it from God, let us not glory as if we had not received it of him, but as the Fruits and Effects of our own Power and Improvements, or for doing more and better than others.

SERMON XXVIII.

Mat. XXV. 14, 15.

And to one he gave five Talents, to another two, and to another one. — And then he that had received the five Talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five Talents. Ver. 16.

FROM hence note,

Doct. That the Children of men, who are called Christs Servants, are Traders, and they ought with their utmost diligence to improve their Talents, or their Lords Money.

As I hinted, I shall

1. Lay down one or two explanatory Propositions, the better to open this Truth.
2. Shew that all are Traders, and ought to improve their Talents.
3. Shew that Christs own household Servants are intrusted with his most choicest Treasure.

I shall begin with the first of these general Heads.

Proposit. That all mankind may be said to be Christs Servants, and are intrusted with some of his Goods, or with one or more Talents.

Some restrain the Servants here only to the special Servants of Christ, namely to Church Members.

But this I think ought not to be done, for the Reasons following.

1. Because Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and all men ought to acknowledge his Dominion and Sovereignty over them, and to submit to his Authority: As thou hast given him Power over all flesh, even over Unbelievers, as well as over Believers, to judge and to condemn them that believe not, as well as to justify them that do believe in his Name. All things, all Persons are put under his Feet, and all shall bow their knees to him, and confess Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

What Talent the Pagan World hath received.

2ly, Because all receive (or have received) one or more Talents from the Lord Jesus Christ, if not as he is Mediator, yet as he is considered Creator: will any say the Heathen have not so much as received one Talent, tho as I hinted one Talent may be in quantity either more or

less; for Parables are not to be straitened, as some suppose, or that a Talent must be so much and no more, and all Talents of the same quality also.

The Gentiles have the Law written in their Hearts, the very same as to the Substance of it as the Jews had wrote in Tables of Stone, and afterwards in a Book. Christ as Creator is the true Light, which lightneth every man that cometh into the World. What Reason, Understanding, Knowledge or Light any have, they received it from the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by him.

Is not rain and fruitful Seasons and all other good things of this World a Talent given to Mankind by the blessed God; he gives the poor Heathen his Gold, Silver, and rich Gums, and precious Spices; with vast Kingdoms to possess? and do not all these things amount so much as unto one Talent? or are not these things given to men to be improved to their Masters use? Moreover he gives this sort the Talent of Trade and outward Commerce and Traffique with Christians.

3ly, All have received one or more Talents from Christ, because they shall all be called to an Account by him: At the last day when he comes to Judgment, will he only call Professors or Church Members to give an Account to him? He shall judge the Secrets of all men.

4ly, And for the Non-improvement of those Talents, gift or gifts men have received, he will condemn them, as this Parable and other Scriptures clearly shew.

2. Proposit. That according to the Nature or quality of that Talent or Talents men have received, such is and will be the Nature of the Improvement thereof; it cannot be improved to things of a higher or different Nature to the principal Stock it self.

To open what I mean, consider,

1. That he that hath no more than the Light of Nature, by the highest Improvement thereof, he can arrive but to meer natural Knowledge, or to simple Morality, he cannot attain thereby to the supernatural Knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, tho he may excell many in meer natural Religion, or moral Vertue, as some of the Heathens of old did.

2. So he to whom God gives the Riches of this World, and not Spiritual riches or the Talents of grace and Spiritual gifts, by the Improvement of their outward Riches (to the Benefit of the Common-Wealth, or to the Profit and Comfort of the Poor) tho they cannot obtain to true grace and eternal Life, yet they may gain thereby the Character of a good and charitable men, and excell others in Morality

The Improvement of Talents of the same species with the Talents themselves.

ty and human Honour, and attain and keep a good Conscience towards men.

3. So they that have natural gifts, and attain acquired parts, cannot arrive to true and saving grace by the Improvement of such gifts and parts, tho they may thereby increase in further Knowledge of those things: as such that study any Art or Science, by Improvement may grow more acute, and excell others in those Arts or Sciences. But *my Brethren*, the Knowledge of the Tongues or of *Logick*, &c. or *Philosophical Learning*, cannot bring men to the saving Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ: *What man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man that is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit.*

1 Cor. 2. 11

That which I drive at,

(1) Is this, *viz.* that the Seed of true grace must be first given as a *Talent*; nay, every grace of the Spirit must be infused into the Souls of such that are truly gracious, before they can improve true grace, (or any one of the graces of the Spirit.)

(2) And that no Improvements of any common Talents or gifts can procure the special grace of God, or be improved to any other Talent differing from their own Species or qualities. And this brings me to the next thing.

4th, That such that God hath given special gifts and saving grace unto, can only improve those gifts and precious graces to that high and most noble End for which they were given; *viz.* the glory of God, and to an increase of more true Spiritual Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and growth in grace, and so to a further meetness for eternal Life: In a word, according to the Quality or Nature of the principal Stock or *Talents* received at first, such is the Nature or Quality of the Improvement made of them. Such as is the *one Talent*, (as to its Nature or Kind) such is the Nature of the Improvement thereof, and so of the *two Talents*, &c.

And that this is so, it clearly appears,

1. Because the Effect cannot exceed the Cause; Thorns cannot produce Grapes, nor Thistles Figs: *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Every Kind begets its own Nature or Kind.

2. Because special grace is Gods special gift; the Seed and Habit of all grace is first given as a Stock to trade with, and to improve, and is not obtained by mans natural Industry or Improvement of common gifts; the holy Spirit must be first received as Seed sown in our Hearts, before grace can grow in us: A man may plow and plow again, and manure his Land long enough (if he sows it not) before any Corn grow up: The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, long Suf-

fering, goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, these things are not the Fruits of Nature, nor the product of mans natural Improvements, or any thing he can do.

Gal. 5. 22.

Obj. *Do not men obtain these Graces by improving the Gospel, or the means of Grace?* &c.

1. *Ans.* The outward means ought to be improved; God having appointed it in order to our obtaining grace; but no man by the best Industry he can use in the Improvement of the outward means, or the preaching of the Gospel can obtain saving grace; no, that is the gift of God alone, and peculiar to himself, or his own *Prerogative* to bestow upon whom he pleaseth; it is only to them the Gospel comes in Power unto, (by the mighty working of the Spirit) that grace is wrought in the Hearts of some.

Do any think God is obliged to give special grace to them that improve common grace, or to give the greater, because they improve the lesser? God is a free Agent, and tho he will, and sometimes doth bless the means, and also ties us to the Improvement of it, yet he works how he pleaseth, he is not tied to it; if grace be the simple product of our Improvement with Gods common blessings; or as he blesteth the Labour of the industrious Husband-man, then we have somewhat to boast of or glory in, but we have nothing to boast of or glory in, we cannot say grace is the product of our labour and Industry, but simply the free gift of God.

God is obliged to none of his Creatures.

2. Because the saving Knowledge of Christ is not, cannot be revealed or attained to, but in a supernatural way by the holy Ghost; it is not had by the Improvement of mans Reason, or mans Wisdom or Industry, or what outward means

No attaining to the true Knowledge of Christ, but by revelation.

soever God hath or doth afford to men in common: *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father that is in Heaven.* By flesh and blood our Lord meaneth the Reason, Wisdom, Learning and Industry of man, he attains not the true Knowledge of Christ by Learning or by Tradition, or any Dictates from man, and Improvements he himself can make thro the Help of all his natural Powers or common Influences of the Spirit, but by the immediate and special Operations and Illuminations of the Spirit; 'tis God who this way begets a full Assent and Consent and Persuasion of the Truth made known to us. Yet is not the Word preached useless, because God makes use of it as an Instrument of his Power, by which ordinarily he works Faith and all grace in our Souls.

Mat. 16. 17

3. Because grace in our Hearts is called the

Eph. 2. 10.

the Image of God, and also the forming of Christ in our Souls, and a Creation work, and therefore peculiar unto God himself; for we are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained, that we should walk in them. Can we by our Industry and any Power of our own form Christ in our Souls, and create the Image of God therein, who cannot form a Fly or a Worm? And from hence it appears it is the free gift of God, and his peculiar Workmanship let him work how he pleaseth.

And how absurd then is it for any to assert this is the product of mens own Improvements of common light and means of grace.

Obj. How can these things be as you say, (i. e.) that all Improvements of Talents are of the same Species or Nature of the principle and original Stock? do not some Merchants trade in Toys, and get by trading Gold, Pearl? &c. or things of a different Species?

Ans. 'Tis a Mistake, those things Merchants venture to Sea, tho in one respect they are, it is true, of different Species to the things they gain by trading, yet in the sense I speak of, they are all of one and the same Species, viz. all earthly and corruptible things, for there are generally but two sorts of Talents, or things that differ in Specie, (i. e.) all are either earthly, or heavenly, common or special.

Why we must attend upon the outward means.

Obj. To what purpose then is it for men to attend upon the means with the greatest Care and Diligence, as praying, hearing? &c.

John 2.

1. Ans. I told you before, because this is the way God hath ordained and commanded us to wait upon him in, and which commonly he powerfully blesteth to that great End I speak of; shall not we hear the Word when required so to do? we are to fill the water pots full of water, but that contributes nothing to the turning of that Water into Wine; no, that is the Work of Christ alone, shall not we pray for that grace or Talent, which is the gift of God; indeed could it be obtained or procured by our Industry or Improvements, there was not altogether that need and Reason that we should cry unto God for it.

2. When God gives us his Spirit he gives us himself; we can do nothing which either can deserve or procure such a gift, or oblige God to bestow it upon us, besides a new Heart, the Spirit, grace, and God to be our God, are all contained in Gods absolute Promises, not made upon any federal Conditions or previous Improvements made by us, or Qualifications in us, so much as to prepare us for them. What

did the Thief on the Cross, or Paul for the obtaining the grace they received? who can oblige God, or plead for such a Talent as saving grace is, or plead for it, for the sake of any thing wretched sinners can do.

3. Is it not said, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy? it is not of our good Desires, good Inclinations, nor our diligent hearing, praying, nor of our highest Improvements, or from any foresight God had of any of these things; no, but of the meer Love and Mercy, and good Pleasure of God. This Text, as our late Annotators note, wounds Pelagians under the fifth Rib: God is a debtor to no man, what are all our poor, lame and imperfect Endeavours?

U S E.

1. By way of Reprehension to such who hold Arminian and Pelagian Errors, who affirm, that men by their Improvements of common grace, common light, and Knowledge may obtain to the true and saving grace of God; nay, that God is obliged to give that grace to them that so do, even Christ and all the Blessings of Christ, and charge God with Injustice, if he doth not bestow him and his Son on such industrious persons.

2. It may also serve to reprove them that assert, that all the Talents are of one Species or Kind, because the Talents which an earthly Lord gives out to his Servants, are or may be all of one and the same kind, as if in a Parable there could be no disparity.

3. It may also tend to humble sorry Mankind, and cast Contempt upon him, and bring down the Pride and vain glory of mans will, or cast free-will into the Dust, and wholly exalt free Grace.

4. It may also teach poor sinners to cry to God for an original or beginning Stock of special grace from God to trade with all, who would bring glory unto God, and enjoy Peace in their own Souls, and also stir them up to a thankful Improvement of the Means God directs them unto, in order to their obtaining it, and may likewise serve to excite all true Believers to improve that blessed Stock they have, and so add other two or five Talents more unto those which they first received when they began to trade.

Secondly, All men are Traders, and ought to trade and improve the Talents they have received.

I shall open this parallel-wise.

1. A Trader either trades with his own, or with another mans Stock, whose Servant he is.—Now, my Brethren, no man hath any Stock or Talent of his own, but all

How all men may be said to have Talents and be Traders.

all their Talents which they are required to improve and trade withall, are the Lords. — *What hast thou which thou hast not received?*

1. Hast thou a rational Soul, Wisdom, Knowledge, and great Understanding? it was given unto thee by the Lord, and that Soul thou oughtest to take care of, and that wisdom, knowledge and understanding, to improve to the great end he gave them to thee, and thou must be accountable unto him in this matter.

2. Hast thou Riches or much wealth? it is the Lords Money, *the Silver, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord.* And again he saith, *I will take away my Corn, and my Flax:* If these things are not improved to the end they are given, the Lord will either take them away, and blast all your Endeavours, or else cut the possessours of them off, only with having their portion in this World.

3. Hast thou acquired parts, great Learning? this is also thy Masters Goods, he gave thee those Faculties by which means thou wast capable to attain to such Learning, and also time to arrive at it.

4. Have you the Gospel, and the Ministration of the Word? this is also the Lords Goods, and must be Improved.

5. Have you faithful Ministers still continued to you, to dispense the Word of Life, and open the Sacred Mysteries of the Gospel, and to feed you with Knowledge and Understanding, and lead you into the way of Truth? why Ministers are the Lords, and you should make the best Improvement of them, and put them into the best capacity you are able, to minister unto you, and submit to them, and obey them in all things in the Lord.

6. Or have you the precious Talent of Time, and the Opportunities of Time? this you are intrusted with by the Lord.

7. Or have you Health, Strength and advantages to attend upon the Word and Means of Grace above many? all this is from the Lord, and ought to be improved as he commandeth.

8. And have you spiritual Gifts and saving Grace? those Talents you also received of the Lord, and what better Talents have any Servants of Christ? he doth not give these to all, no but a very few have these rich and precious Talents?

9. Are you Fathers or Masters, and so have Authority over, and intrusted with Families, Children, and Servants? these are Talents received of the Lord. Or are some of you Ministers or Magistrates? Certainly you are intrusted with a great Talent, and the Lord looks for a due Improvement of those places of Trust and Dignity, for we are but Stew-

ards of whatsoever we have or are intrusted with.

Secondly, Traders ought to know the worth of those Commodities put into their hands, and intrusted to trade with: So every man ought to know the worth of his own Soul, the worth and preciousness of their Time, the worth and preciousness of the Word of God, and of the worth of Grace, and of all other spiritual Blessings and good things; and as we should know the great worth and excellencies of spiritual things, that are

Traders, so likewise we should know the little worth and value of all earthly things when compared to spirituals: Or whatsoever we call our own, the little worth of earthly Riches, Pleasures and Honours, human Learning and all acquired parts; as also the little worth of our own Duties, external Priviledges, and inherent Righteousness, in comparison of the Righteousness of Christ: If we know not this, we may soon overvalue the one, and undervalue the other; and so in our dealing through Ignorance be cheated and run out of all, even esteem of earthly things and Riches above the Riches of

of Heaven, or humane Learning above the Spirits teaching, and the Gifts and Graces thereof; or your own Righteousness (which Paul esteemed but as dung) above the Righteousness of God which is by Faith. Some are unskilful Traders, they have not wisdom to know how some Commodities excell others; and so some spiritual Traders through ignorance know not the worth of the Truth, and other things they trade in, the worth of reconciliation, union, justification, pardon of sin, peace with God, and Communion with the Father and the Son, and of that free access we have to God, or to trade with the Father in and through Jesus; they know not the worth of Ordinances, nor the worth and preciousness of the Promises, and from hence refuse to trade with Jesus Christ for them: Should not Merchants, Jewellers or Goldsmiths know precious Stones, Gold and Pearls? they else may be cheated, or refuse to buy when they might be greatly enriched: and so may poor mortals here also through Ignorance be cheated, or refuse to buy of Christ *Gold try'd in the Fire, &c.*

Thirdly, Traders must not be Timorous or fearfull in laying out their Money; no more should such that are Traders in a spiritual sence, they should lay their strength out, spend their Time freely in Gods Service, and part with all they have to gain the Pearl of great Price.

Fourthly, Traders should know where to buy, or of whom, and who to trade with; so should spiritual Traders; they must

Spiritual Traders ought to know the worth of their Lords goods.

Spiritual things of great worth.

Earthly things and our Duties and righteousness worth little.

Phil. 3.8,9.

Rev. 3.18.

must know it is of Christ they must buy : *buy of me, &c.*

All things we want are in Christ.

1. Consider, That Jesus Christ is never without all sorts of Goods, and also hath great plenty of them, he hath all things we need or can need.

2. He will cheat no man, and being faithfull, never sells counterfeit Goods; and so Just, that he never fails, or breaks his word, or promises. *All the Promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.*

3. Christ is also very rich; 'tis dangerous to trade with some persons, and bad to trust them, because they may break, but no fear of that here, for all the riches of grace and glory are his; the Father hath put all things into his hands; do you trade for Gifts? *Christ hath received gifts for men;* or do you trade or seek to him for grace? *he is full of grace and truth:* do you trade for Pardon? *he will abundantly pardon.* Do you trade for strength? He is our Strength, *he is mighty,* (nay All-mighty) *to save—he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength—in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* Do you want Counsel? *He is the mighty Counsellour; Counsel is mine, &c.* Do you want Wisdom? *In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge—If any man lack Wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him;* or do you want Purity and Holiness, he is the Fountain to wash in, and cleanseth us from all filthiness—*He loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* Are you sinners, and want peace with God? He hath made our peace and full reconciliation; peace is in him, tho it is given to none but to such that apply themselves to God in and by Faith in him; or do you need Righteousness? *He is the Jehovah our Righteousness;* he is the Sun of Righteousness, the Sun is not fuller of light than Christ is full of Righteousness. O who would not trade with the Lord Jesus Christ?

Eph. 4. 8.

Joh. 1. 14.

Ira. 55. 7.

Ira. 63. 1.

Ira. 40. 29.

Prov. 8. 14.

Col. 2. 3.

Jam. 1. 5

Zach. 13. 1.

Mal. 4. 2.

Traders must know the Terms how to buy Goods.

Isa. 55. 1, 2.

Ira. 61. 3.

Fifthly, Traders must know the terms upon which they are to trade, or how to buy: Some trades call for ready Money, others exchange one sort of Goods for others; so poor sinners that would trade with Jesus Christ, must know on what terms they may have what they need.

(1.) It is not with Money; *buy Wine and Milk without Money;* Justification without any previous qualifications, or any righteousness of your own; also it is without price, that is without money-worth, you are to give nothing that hath any value or worth in it for what you receive of him, yet 'tis upon Exchange, and therefore called a buying, but what must we exchange, or what do we receive thereupon? even *Beauty for ashes, and the Oyl*

of gladness for mourning, and the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness: Not that you can mourn for sin until he gives you the Spirit of grace to help you to look unto him; you must part with your filthy rags, if you would be cloathed with his Robe of Righteousness, and so will you be cloathed with the garment of praise or with joy and singing also; tho these things purchase not what we receive of him, yet we must part with all these, sell all we have to win Christ.

(2) Indeed all things we need, are freely given of God thro Jesus Christ:—

Let him that thirsteth take the water of life freely. Justification freely, pardon of sin freely, for his own Name sake; for the whole design of this Trade is to advance the Riches of Gods free grace.

Sixthly, Traders must know in whose Name they must trade, and come for what they want, whether in their own or in their Masters Name; it is not allowed for Servants to trade in their own Names; neither perhaps should they so do would they be trusted: So sinners and all that would trade for another World, must know whether they must come to God in their own Names, or in the Name of another. (1.) Not in our own Names, for if we do, we shall receive nothing of God, our credit being gone, he will not trust us. (2.) We must trade in our great Masters Name, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Whatsoever you ask in my Name that will I do for you.* That is, upon the account of his Merits, for his sake, and by means of his worth, and by the vertue of his intercession, and also by his authority, he having impowered us, or given boldness and free access unto us to come to the Father: And also in his Name denotes, that we should do all to his glory, and assume none of it to our selves, but that we should wholly labour to glorifie the Son, and the Father in him.

Seventhly, Traders must trust, or else perhaps they will have little or no trade at all, and great Traders are acquainted therewith; they trust sometimes six or twelve months, so such that trade with Christ, or with God in Christs Name, and improve their Talents, must trust the Lord Jesus; if you cannot trust him, and rest by Faith upon him, and take his word and Promises, you will receive nothing of him, neither righteousness, pardon, peace, strength, comfort, nor salvation. What is, *my Brethren,* believing in Christ, but trusting him, or depending upon his Word and faithful Promises, relying upon the sufficiency, merits, power and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. *In him all that believe are justified from all things, &c.* They are poor Traders that must have all in hand presently payd down: some poor weak Christians, who are not rich

Zach. 12.

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Rev. 22. 17

Traders must know

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rich in Faith, they cannot trust God, or wait for the accomplishment of his Promises. — How long did the Father trust the Son, or take his Word that he would come and pay him all our vast debts ! and how long did Abraham trust God for the performance of his Promise of giving him a Son, or before the Child of the Promise was given : *He believed in hope against hope* : And saith David, *In the Lord have I put my trust ; — Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.* — Trust in him at all times, ye people. Tho the Providences of God seem to cross his Promises, or God seem long before we have the Promise made good to us, or to his *Sion*, yet we must trust in him, and not doubt but in due time he will perform whatsoever he hath promised. Now there are two or three things to strengthen our trusting in God.

Rom. 4.18

Jer. 17.7.

Psal. 62.8.

Great security, or grounds given to us to trust in God thro Christ Jesus.

Psal. 89.

34. 35.

Heb. 6.

6. 13.

Vers. 17, 18

1. That tho we deserve nothing, can merit nothing, yet Christ hath merited all things that are needfull for us, and he is deserving, God will not deny us the merits of his Sons Blood.

2. God who hath promised is immutable, he changes not; he never changes his Mind, nor his absolute Purposes and Decrees. *He will not lye to David, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.*

3. We have not only his Promise but his Oath; this denotes that the Lord foresaw how hard it would be for us to trust or believe in him; and also it shews the wonderfull condescension of God to his poor Creatures. Moreover it discovers the greatest ground for us to believe in him imaginable. Shall God not only promise but oblige himself by Oath ! Stand and wonder O ye Heavens ! See what the Psalmist saith; *Once have I sworn by my Holiness, &c.* Again it is said, *When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself : — An Oath among men is to put matters out of all doubt, and so put an end to all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. — who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* That man must needs see cause strangely to reflect upon himself, that cannot trust in God, in the true God, especially when his Oath is pass'd in the case. O what horrid Unbelief is there in our Hearts !

4. Because no soul whoever that trusted in the Lord missed of help and succour in the proper season, when he saw it would do them the most good. *God shall help her and that right early.* No man ever trusted in God thro Jesus Christ, and waited patiently upon him, but re-

ceived most sure and seasonable returns from him. Shall God lose his Credit, and not be believed by his Creatures ? nay shall his own Children not trust in him, and rely upon his faithfulness ?

5. If God seems to delay the performance of his Promises, it is to trye, and put our Graces into exercise, to try our Faith in him, and our Love to him, and the Grace of Patience also; or else he sees we are not ready to receive what he promised, or the time is not yet come when the Mercy will do us the most good, and bring the greatest Honour and glory to his own Name.

6. That Mercy which we have long waited for, will be very sweet and consolatory unto us when it comes; if men are sure of safe and great returns, they wait with much patience, content and satisfaction. *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when it cometh 'tis a tree of life.* Pro. 13.12.

Ninthly, Traders or Merchants (as I shewed you in opening another Parable) must keep their Books well, and see that their Accounts stand fair, and know whether they thrive or go behind hand; so every Christian or spiritual Trader, should see how things stand between God and his own Soul, that he may know whether he grows in Faith, in Love, in Zeal, in Humility and in Holiness, or not; and if he finds he is grown more cold, more earthly, proud and unbelieving, it is a sad sign of breaking, or that his Heart is not right with God, or at least that he is under some fore temptation, and also under the withdrawals of the quickening presence of Christ, nor can such tell where their partial Apostacy may end. However, the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger. Job 17. 9.

Tenthly, Some Traders do not improve their Lords Money, and tho intrusted but with one Talent, yet improve not that, but mind more their own private business than the concerns of their Lord. And this as our Saviour shews in this Parable many to whom he hath given but one Talent, do not Improve it, but hide it in the Earth.

Eleventhly, Some Traders break, and expose such that are faithful Dealers to loss and shame; even so also some Professors backslide or revolt from God, and turn spiritual Bankrupts, to the great dishonour of God, the reproach of Religion and faithful Christians; and these are exposed and in great danger every day to fall into the hands of divine Justice, into the hands of the living God, and to be cast into Prison, where under eternal Wrath they must abide, untill they have paid the uttermost farthing.

SERMON XXIX.

Matth. XXV. 16.

Then he that had received the five Talents, went and traded with the same: — And likewise he that had received the two, &c. Verf. 17.

DOCT. *That the Children of men who are called Christs Servants, are Traders.*

I have opened this, and shewed how fitly they may be compared to Traders, which closed with the second general head of Discourse.

Thirdly, I shall shew, That Christs own domestick Servants are intrusted with his most choice Treasure.

I have before proved, that these Talents are not all alike in quality, as the Text shews they are not in quantity.

The excellency of some Talents above others. 1. Some, nay multitudes in the World (that Christ will call to reckon with when he comes to Judgment) have only natural or external Talents given to them, as natural Light, Knowledge, Riches, and other common Endowments; but true Believers, who are Christs domestick Servants, have special, spiritual and heavenly Talents given to them, true spiritual Light, Knowledge, Grace, Riches and Righteousness.

And now all must acknowledge these in their nature and quality, as they differ from the other, so they far excell, or are much better than those the Pagan World or meer earthly men and Reprobates have, or are entrusted with. *The Merchandize of wisdom is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold.* By wisdom here most conclude is meant Jesus Christ, who is called *the Wisdom of God*; and also takes in true Grace, or the true fear and saving Knowledge of God. — *They shall die without wisdom (or instruction) speaking of wicked men, Prov. 5. 23. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. O how few have this Talent.*

2. They must be the best Talents, if we consider further more particularly the Matter of them, or what is contained in these Talents, even as was hinted, the blessed God himself, and Jesus Christ himself; he gives himself to some, tho

but to a few, and this is the great Covenant Promise, *I will be your God, and you shall be my People.* O what a Talent is the gift of the Spirit, and true Grace, and all those things that accompany it!

3. That they are the best Talents, or far excell them that are given to others, appears, because they that have them are by the Lord pronounced happy. *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.* Such are truly happy here, happy while they live, and shall be happy at death, and also eternally happy: Their riches are the best Riches, their Honours are the best Honours, and their delights and pleasures far excell all the sensual delights and pleasures of wicked men.

4. Who can count up or compute the Riches and infinite worth that is in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Believers Portion. *Their lot is fallen in pleasant places, they have a goodly Heritage:* Who can reckon up all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, or what is contained in the Promises of the Gospel? They are, *my Brethren*, of an incomparable nature, far exceeding the Onyx, the Saphir, the Chrystal, or the chiefest Pearl.

5. Their nature and excellency may be known, if we consider the Spring or Rise of them, and that also they are a certain Token or Pledge of the special Love of God. The Fathers Love is the Spring or Fountain from whence they come. God loves all his Creatures with a common love, and he gives them his common favours: But he loves his Elect with a special and peculiar Love, and therefore he bestows on them his special and peculiar Blessings, or Talents that far excell all such he gives to others. *Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* Moreover these special Talents or choice Treasure God hath given to his people, are as a certain pledge to them that they were comprehended in his Eternal Love, and are some of his own Elect. When God gives his Spirit to any man, saving Grace to any man, it is also a pledge to them of their being justified, and pardoned, and that they shall be eternally saved; therefore the Talents these have, far exceed in worth and Excellencies all others whatsoever; these are soul-enriching, soul-raising, soul-exalting, and soul-satisfying Treasure; they that God gives these Talents to, may say with Jacob, *They have all.*

6. Their great worth also appears, by that wonderfull price that was laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ to purchase them: These Talents were the special purchase of the Blood of Jesus Christ: True Grace is the special Fruit of Christs

Merits,

Merits or glorious Purchase. True, we have them cheap enough, being given to us freely, yet we part with our all for them, and so did every one that ever was possessed with them: had an inlightened sinner Kingdoms and Crowns, rather than he would not have or should be denied of these things, he would part with them presently, and condemn all earthly Crowns and Kingdoms, as *Moses* did the glory of *Egypt*, in comparison of these things.

Spiritual things cost-ly to God and to Christ.
O costly Wares, (faith one) Gods All goes, Christs All goes, and the sinners All goes also, to enjoy them.

The *Magazeen* and Treasures of Heaven are emptied, yet do not mistake, the sinner finds the flesh must be crucified, the Old Man must die, if he possess the Talent of grace and the new Birth. O, the Woundings, the Launcings, the Bleedings, and Heart-pricking Pangs that often attend the new Birth, these lead the van to this Banner of Love; these are like Storms and Tempests to the Flesh, to the *Old man*, or Body of sin and death; self is wounded, the Life of sin, and the Love of this World is at once let out.

7. The gain by trading in these Commodities is great, and hath the best Increase or *Incomes*.

Ver. 20. Thou deliveredst to me five Talents, behold I have gained besides them five Talents more.

They may be improved to double Increase, to as much more in respect of the quantity; but this is not all, he that improved his two Talents, is made a Ruler over two Cities, and he that improved his five Talents, is made a Ruler over five Cities; besides what a Believer may arrive to here in improving of his special Talents of grace and saving Knowledge: As to a further likeness to God, or Communion with him, or in Comfort and Consolation, there are great Rewards of grace attends the Improvement of grace, and all other spiritual and peculiar gifts of God.

8. The Duration of these things shews forth the excellent Nature of them, they are Eternal things, Love to God, Peace of Conscience, and a Likeness to God, we shall carry out of the World with us. The Lord that gives grace, gives also glory to his faithful Servants.

Lastly, The Returns that these Traders meet with, shews 'tis the best Trade and the choicest Treasure.

Christ makes the best returns to them that trade with him.
1. Great things for that which is of very little value; what is a cup of cold water to a Crown of glory? what are ashes, or mourmig, or a spirit of heaviness, in Comparison of that glorious Beauty, spiritual Joy and eternal Praises, which Christ returns for those small things.

2. Quick returns, see what the Lord

says: *Before they call I will answer*, tho it *Isa. 65. 24.* is not thus always.

3. They are always certain returns, none miscarry; no Ship is cast away that is well freighted with grace.

4. Seasonable Returns, just when the Lord sees we need the Mercy, and it will do us most good, then we shall have it.

U S E.

1. Be exhorted to choose this Trade, the Trade of Godliness; you that are willing to be hired and become some of Christs special and domestick Servants, shall receive of these Talents to trade with.

2. O begin early, you young men, enter upon this Trade in your Youth, 'tis best and soonest learned then, and you will have the longer Experience, and the more time to grow rich and intcrease in heavenly Treasure.

3. Take heed you do not begin in this Trade without a Stock of saving grace, or think you can manage this calling with a Stock of simple Morality, or only with common Light and Knowledge, or by improving your natural Abilities for procuring the Spirit and grace of Christ. And you that are true Christians, mind well, and be sure follow this your general calling, and labour you do not go back. But to proceed.

And so he that received the five Talents came and brought with him other five Talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five Talents, behold I have gained besides them five Talents more, ver. 20.

He also that had received two Talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst to me two Talents, behold I have gained two other Talents besides them, ver. 22.

Then he which received the one Talent came and said, Lord, I knew thou wert an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, ver. 24.

And I was afraid, and went and hid thy Talent in the earth, lo there is that is thine, ver. 25.

Note from hence.

Doct. That such who have received five Talents, and two Talents, do improve them, but he that received the one Talent improved it not.

I do not mean by this Proposition (that lies clear to me in the Text) that all true Believers who have received most from God, or the greatest Talents, do always improve them, proportionably above such who have received less light, Knowledge, parts, &c. but that all who do receive the true and saving grace of

T t t t t

God,

God, Light and Knowledge, do more or less improve them Talents, or gain more, but that he that receives but one Talent, never improves that one as he ought and might do. No man certainly hath received less than one Talent.

1. *I shall lay down several Propositions, the better to open the Nature of the Talents.*

2. *I shall shew what may be meant by five, and by two Talents, and what by the one Talent.*

3. *What may be meant by hiding of the one Talent.*

4. *Why such may be said to hide that one Talent.*

1. *Proposit.* All Talents, as I hinted, are of two sorts, Earthly or Heavenly, Temporal or Spiritual, Common or Special.

What the five and two talents are as to their Nature.

2. *Proposit.* That the two Talents, and the five, tho they differ in quantity, yet I conceive they do not in quality; for both these Servants, or all signified by him that had the five, and him that had the two, were faithful Servants, and were saved; now the same grace, the same Faith, the same Knowledge, as to kind that one true Believer hath, all have; hence the Apostle Peter speaking of the Faith of Gods Elect, calls it like precious

2 Pet. i. 1. *Faith. To them who have obtained like precious Grace is of Faith with us, thro' the Righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* 'Tis not like in respect of the Degree or Measure of it, but in respect to the Kind or Nature of it, and the Object of it. All have true Faith, unfeigned Faith, Faith that works by Love, the Faith of Gods Elect, and the Faith of the Operation of God; by all these and other Names is Faith called, but some have but a weak Faith, others a strong Faith, some a little, and others a great Faith; so some good Christians have small Knowledge, gifts and parts, in comparison of what some other good Christians and Ministers have: Now these things being matter of Fact, and well known to all Gods People, as well as confirmed by his holy Word, none need to doubt the Truth thereof.

Moreover, will any dare to say, that a man to whom God never gave a Stock or Talent of saving Faith, can by any Power or Improvement of the Talent he hath, arrive unto eternal Life?

3. *Proposit.* That no man living, or ever lived upon the Earth (to whom God gave Talents) ever improved them to the utmost they might have done.

All the Godly ever confessed how they have failed therein: Moreover, they that received the one Talent, 'tis evident, did not improve it to the end it was given; and as many Saints are signified by him that had the five Talents, and many

by him that had the two Talents: So a multitude no doubt are signified by him that had the one Talent, even all that eternally perish, and they are those who never received (nor may be never desired) the saving grace of God.

4. *Proposit.* That God gives more to them that are saved, than he gives to them that perish, and this I think is as fully intimated by our blessed Lord in this Parable as any thing whatsoever; if it is not partly one grand design of our Lord therein, and did he not indeed give more to, and do more for them that are saved (or for his Elect) than for others; they would certainly perish with the rest of Mankind; for such that are saved, who had the least given to them, had more than one single Talent, or that Talent which all men generally receive from God.

If therefore these Talents do comprehend all Mankind, and take in the special grace of God also, as our Annotators declare they do, and other worthy Expositors; then what I say, I am sure, cannot be denied, but that the things I have hinted in these previous Propositions may be safely drawn from what is signified by the five, by the two, and by the one talent.

Secondly, *Shew what may be meant by the five and two talents.*

1. I conceive by these Talents are comprehended, even in the two and five, all things whatsoever that is the Lords goods, or that grace, Light and saving Knowledge, &c. given to all Gods Elect. Tho some of the Saints receive more of those precious things than others.

1. Some have greater grace, greater measures of Knowledge, greater gifts both temporal and spiritual, some have much of the Riches of this World, which they as good Stewards improve from a principle of Love to Christ, to the glory of God, and Support of the Gospel, the Church and Ministry of the Gospel in the World, which will in the Life to come be remembered and redound to their Account, as an Act of Gods free grace to them who will not forget their work of Faith, and labour of Love. Heb. 6. 10.

2. Some of the Saints are in greater places of Trust, and in higher Stations in the World and Church also, as well as indowed with greater Parts, gifts and Learning, and so are capacitated to do more for God, and bring greater glory to him, and profit to the Souls of men, and good to the Church of God. How useful have some Ministers been in their day, what Pains and Labour did they take, and how have they been a Blessing to the World and People of God!

3. He that received the one Talent, (and

(and all those signified in him) may be such that only received outward Favours, or temporal good things, together with common and external gifts, Knowledge, Parts and Attainments of the like Nature whatsoever, and which in respect of that different and peculiar Talent of special grace, it may be partly called *one Talent*. He having not Talents of differing Species, as all the true Children of God have; viz. both common Favours and saving grace also.

4. Therefore I conceive the one Talent may in quantity be more or less; as for Example, the *Heathen* (none will deny) have one Talent, but they have not so great a *one Talent* as such who have the outward Ministration of the Gospel, and all other Advantages in a Land of Vision, besides the great natural and acquired parts, and learning some of them, may and do attain unto. Yet I say this may nevertheless be called but the one Talent, being all but common Indowments, common grace, gifts and Knowledge, and not any of them having received the holy sanctifying Spirit of God, nor so much as one dram of saving grace.

5. And as I said, it appears that he that received the one Talent, did not faithfully according to his Ability improve his Talent; so it may signify that no meer natural men (that have received that which is the least) do improve it as they might (or are able) and so may be condemned for not doing what they were impowered to do, or for wasting, hiding and slighting the Light and Means of grace that was afforded them, under *Idle* and frivolous pretensions, tho the fullest Improvement of one Talent cannot bring any Person into a state of grace, or save him, because the Seed of grace (or the prime and Original Stock) must be *first* given, before there can be an Exercise or an Improvement made of it; and all know that without true Faith in Christ and Regeneration no man can be saved; and as evident it is that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither indeed can he*, &c. that is, by any Power or Industry of his own, but it must be given to him immediately from the Lord

Object. *It will then follow that no Heathen or Pagan can be saved?*

1. *Ans.* That may be a great Mistake, for some of the *Heathen* might hear of Jesus Christ, and have Faith in him; by some means or another it might be revealed to them (tho the Light of Nature cannot do it) and so receive more than the one Talent.

2. Some that lived before Christ came, might converse with the *Jews*, or have

Knowledge of *Moses* Writings, as History makes appear many of them had, as well as the Word of God shews the same thing.

3. 'Tis said that there was among the *Gentiles, Women that prophesied* of Christs coming, and of his bloody Passion, &c. that were called *Sibbels*, (tho some think what is said of them is fabulous.)

4. Or might not God in some supernatural way (when he spoke in divers ways and manners unto the Fathers) make Christ known unto them?

To conclude with this, certainly God will condemn men for not doing those things which he requires of them; and where the Gospel comes, how do many slight it! and tho *Light is come into the World, men love Darknes rather than Light.* Joh. 3. 19. And this our Saviour saith is the *Condemnation*.

And hid thy Talent in the earth, &c. ver. 25.

In *vers.* 18. it is said, *He digged in the earth and hid his Lords money.*

Quest. *What may be meant by his digging in the earth, and hiding of his Lords money?*

Ans. Digging in the earth may signify ^{What may be meant by hiding his one Talent.} his labouring for the meat that perishes more ^{be meant by hiding his one Talent.} than that meat which endureth to everlast-
ing Life; or his minding earthly things, being more busie in pursuing after the *Joh. 6. 27.* World than in improving that Knowledge he had of divine things, or of the means of grace which God was pleased to afford him.

2. *Hiding* his Talent may also denote his concealing those Convictions he might have in his Conscience in respect of sin or of duty. Some men may be convinced of many sins they live in, and of their duty in closing with Christ and following him in a way of Obedience, but they strive to stifle those Convictions, and keep all in their own Breast; and will not improve that Light and Knowledge they have, but wholly give way to earthly Thoughts and to the Temptations of Satan, and so dig in the earth rather than look up to Heaven; and what is this less than a hiding their Lords money? they will not declare to others what Troubles, what Fears and terrifying Thoughts they sometimes have had, concerning the state of their Souls and of Eternity, but strive to quench the motions of the Spirit, and so put out that fire that was kindled in their Hearts, and will not make a profession of what they some times experienced God had done for them by his common Influences of his Spirit and workings of their own awakened Consciences.

3. Perhaps one great part of his Talent lay in earthly Riches, and that he laid up and refused to improve it by distributing accord-

according to his Ability to the Poor, and to support the Interest of Christ: Some who have the one Talent no doubt may be Church Members, and this way the *Young man* mentioned in the Gospel, hid his Talent, who when our Lord bid him *sell all he had, and give it to the poor, and follow him, went away very sorrowful*; he hid his Talent in the earth, and would not trade for Heaven.

4. Or perhaps part of this one Talent might lie in spiritual gifts and Abilities, in the Improvement of which he might have been useful to the Church, or for the good of others, but he might utterly refuse to exercise those gifts, but hid or conceal'd them, and by pursuing with an inordinate warmth the things of the World, might hide his Talent, if neither earthly Riches or spiritual gifts are improved as God requires, they may be said to be hid.

5. Or perhaps God gives men much Health and many precious Opportunities to attend upon the means of grace, but out of love to their Trades and secular Affairs they spend all their time, Health and Strength about the things of this Life, and tho' the Word of God be preached daily but a few doors off where they live, yet they will not spare an hour or two in a whole Week to attend upon the Ministration thereof; and when they are told of their great Neglect, they find one excuse or another, and so hide their Lords money, or will not improve the Talent God gave them.

Thirdly, *Why do such who receive the one talent hide it?*

From whence it is that some hide their Talent.

1. *Ans.* No doubt but it may be from that Multiplicity of earthly Concerns that is in their Hand, they have so much Business of their own, and are carried away so much with Self-love, that they can find no time to worship, obey, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The Love of the World is in their heart, they can find no leisure time yet to think seriously of their immortal Souls, and of eternal things.

2. They may hide their Talent, because the Fire burns too hot for them, I mean Convictions are too strong, that have taken hold of their Consciences, or that Candle that is lighted, if they put it not under a Bed, or quench the fire kindled in them, they fear they may come under Reproach and be derided by their ungodly Neighbours or Company they used to keep, or perhaps they may foresee the fire will waste too much of the Fuel, I mean their Substance, perceiving Religion may be too chargeable for them, and from hence are led by Satan to hide their Talent.

3. By what our Saviour here intimateth in respect of this persons plea, one chief

Reason of his hiding of his Talent, is upon a false Apprehension of the blessed God; he confesseth he had not traded with his Lords money, or had not improved his Talent well: and what Answer doth he give? what was the Reason of his Unfaithfulness? See what he says:

And he said, Lord, I knew that thou wert an hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strawed, and I was afraid and went and hid thy talent, &c. vers. 24, 25.

He chargeth his Lord with the highest Injustice, not only that he was an austere or a severe man, but a cruel and unreasonable man, for so much and no less is implied in his Answer: Is not he a cruel and an unjust man, that would reap where he never sowed? this Person seems to talk like an *Arminian*, some that hold those Notions, argue much as this man doth; Thou dost expect that I shall improve what thou gavest me, and yet thou never didst give me thy saving grace, nor sowed the Seed of it in my Heart, and all the Improvement I can make of the Talent thou hast given me, (I am told by thy Servants) will not bring me to Heaven, what should I labour to improve what I have, for, it will bring no saving Profit to my Soul? If thou hadst done for me as for some others, I should have done as they did, the fault is not in me, but if I perish, the cause is because thou didst not sow the Seed of true Grace and Holiness in my Heart.

But the Answer his Lord gave him, may tend to silence him, and all free-willers in the World.

His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful Servant, thou knewest that I reaped where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strawed,—thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury, ver. 26, 27.

1. What tho God acts in a way of Sovereignty, and gives more to one man than he gives unto another, yet ought not he that receives the smallest Talent, or but one, to improve that one?

2. May not God require of man that which he hath lost that Power which originally he had? man had Power to keep the Law of perfect Obedience, and it was by his own sin he became weak, and is made unable now perfectly to keep it; yet is it not his duty still to keep it? hath God lost his Power to command, because man hath lost his Power to obey? and because man cannot change his own Heart, nor wash himself from his Iniquity; can he not reform his ways, nor cry to God for Help, and improve the means God directs

rects to in order to Faith and Regeneration.

3. Or because Gods Elect are help'd to believe and to obtain Eternal Life, shall any ungodly Wretches have an Excuse in the day of Judgment to say, *Thou reapest where thou hast not sown*, or requir'st that of us thou gavest us no Power to do? I tell you again, that all men are condemned for the breach of the Law or Covenant of Works; and their Slothfulness and Neglect of improving the Means and Talent God hath afforded them, will aggravate their Condemnation.

4. If God hath chosen some, all should strive to see that they are effectually called; for none can know that they were elected but by their being effectually called.

5. He that hath but one Talent, is in a Capacity to improve that one, and God commands him so to do, and for his Non-improvement of it our Lord shews in this Parable, he shall be cast into Hell:

And cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness. Take here what our *Learned Annotators* have said upon the Answer of this Person. "*The Lord of the Unprofitable*"

"*Servant* tells him that the Fault lay in his own sloth and wickedness, and his dread of his *Lords Severity* was but a meer frivolous Pretence, and unreasonable Excuse; for if he had dreaded any such thing, he would have done what he could.—And shall not God as justly another day reply upon those who think to excuse their lewd and wicked lives, their Impenitency and Unbelief from their not being elected, not having Power of themselves to repent and believe, nor receiving efficacious grace. O you wicked and slothful Wretches, did you suspect or fear you were not elected, why then did you not give all Diligence to make your calling and Election sure? Do you plead the Power of your own will to repent and believe, and that I did not give you special and effectual Grace? But had you not a Power to keep from Taverns and Ale-Houses? and to keep from lying and swearing, and open Prophanation of my Sabbaths? had you not Power to read, to hear, and to pray, if you had to the uttermost used the Talent I gave you, and I had been wanting in my further necessary Influences of Grace, ye might indeed have said something, but when you made no use of the Talent you had, why should I trust you with more? Faith comes by *hearing, reading, praying*, you had Power to improve these Talents you had, if you took me to be so severe a Master, why did you not do what was in your Power to do? &c. Thus the *Annotators*.

Wicked men do not improve the Talent they have: He that is condemned at the great day, (it appears by what our Lord shews in this Parable) will be charged with this, they do not use the means, nor cry to God for Faith, to enable them to believe, but sin against the Light of their Consciences, and hate the Light, or love Darknes rather than the Light, and this will be their Condemnation.

APPLICATION.

1. *Reproof.* This reproves such that say, the one Talent is saving Grace, or of the same species with those who are sincere Believers, or the *two*, or the *five*, and if indeed it was so as they affirm, then all men in the World have saving Grace, because there are none that have less than one Talent, and then it also follows God hath no special Love to one man more than another, and then also meer natural men have Power to receive the things of the Spirit, and they can discern them; and yet the *Apostle* says they cannot; and then also Salvation would not be of Gods free Grace, but of mans free will.

2. *Exhort.* Be stirred up every Soul of you, to a diligent Improvement of the Means of Grace, and of the Talents you have received; have you the Gospel? have you Gospel Sermons and Gospel Seasons? have you Convictions? have you Knowledge, have you Gifts, labour to improve them; for know, God will leave all men without any Excuse at the great day.

Be exhorted from hiding your Talents.

For MOTIVES to excite.

1. By hiding your Talent you will shew, that either you are ashamed or afraid to own and confess Jesus Christ, or else that you have earthly Hearts, and are Idle and slothful Persons in spiritual matters; and either of these shew the Badness and Baseness of your Hearts.

2. God also by this means loseth that Glory which he expected from you, in bestowing those Talents upon you; we should remember that the Talents are given to trade with, that we may bring Honour unto God, and Profit to ourselves and to others also: *Let your Light* Mat. 5. 16. *so shine before men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is Heaven.* Tho' we can add nothing to Gods Essential Glory, yet we may predicate and manifest his Glory, and the Glory of his rich Grace in us.

3. Otherwise also you will be great losers, for the Profit of Improvement will re-

undound

All men should labour to see themselves effectually called.

contin. of Pool.

dound to you: *He that is righteous, is righteous for himself.* Properly God receives nothing of us, the more thou gainest by trading, the richer thou wilt be, the more rich in Faith, rich in Love, and rich in good Works, and more rich in Experiences, and the more joy, and Comfort, and Peace of Conscience thou wilt find.

4. Hereby also others will receive the more Profit by thee; the World suffers loss by the Non-improvement of those Talents the Servants of Christ have received; how can we be the Lights of the World, if we hide our Candle under a Bushel, or put it under a Bed? they that are in the House will have no light by it, which is indeed to go about to frustrate the very End and design of our Heavenly Father in lighting our Candle.

5. Besides consider, that hereby thou wilt appear to be a faithful Servant of Christ, and not a slothful and idle Person, and thou wilt also have the more Faith to
 Heb. 4. 16. *live on in the day of need: Thou knowest*
 Eccl. 11. 2. *not what evil may be in the earth, thou*
 Prov. 6. 6. *mayst be taken off of thy trading. The Ant gathers her food in the Summer, else how should she live in Winter? These Opportunities of improving thy Talents may fail, our day may be darkened, and dismal Storms may soon rise, and our Spiritual Trade be obstructed by our Enemies.*

6. If you hide your Talents, you will certainly be undone, you will come to utter Beggery; *For so shall thy Poverty come upon thee as one that travelleth, and thy Want as an Armed Man.* What is the fruit of Idleness but shame and Poverty? *Such shall beg at Harvest, and have nothing.*

7. Moreover consider, thou art but a Steward of thy Masters Goods, and shalt be called to an Account when he comes, and the Non-improvement of thy Talent will bring eternal Destruction upon thy Soul, he will say, *Take the Unprofitable Servant, and cast him into utter Darknes, &c.* You will certainly one day repent the Non-improvement of your time, your Health, your Treasure, your Opportunities, your Gifts, your Light and Knowledge, or whatsoever God hath bestowed upon you, and expects the Improvement of.

SERMON XXX.

MATH. XXV. 19.

And after a long time the Lord of those Servants comes and reckoneth with them.

THIS coming of our Lord refers to his coming the *second* time, and it also shews, that when he appears, he will call all men to an Account, or judge the whole World. *Christ will judge all men at the last day.*

1. And now that our Saviour will come again the *second* time, we have fully proved in opening of the precedent Parable; No one Truth is more clearly confirmed in the Word of God.

Also we have shewed, how, or after what a glorious Manner he will appear, and pray observe, that when Christ comes, our working time will be over, *the Harvest then will be ended, the Servants shall then receive their Rewards; he will reward every one according as his work shall be.* — *We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.* *Rev. 22. 11 Rom. 14. 10.*

Note also:

That tho Christ will come again, yet it seems long before he comes: *After a long time the Lord of those Servants comes.*

1. It seems long to the World, even so long that many say in their Hearts, that he will never come again.

2. Also the time seems long to the Saints, who love him, and long for his Appearance: especially to such who are persecuted and in great Tribulation; and the slothful Servant by this means says, *My Lord delays his coming.* But come he will, and when he comes the Godly will rejoyce with exceeding great Joy, it will be a happy day to them; but be a dismal day to the Wicked, and to all Idle and slothful Servants; they do not desire that day, no, they have abused his Mercys, and contemned his Grace, and wasted his Goods, he will come in flaming Fire to all such, to take Vengeance upon them, and let out his fierce Wrath: *Sinners in Sion then will be afraid, fearfulness shall surprize the Hypocrites.* *2 Thel. 1. 8 Ila. 33. 14.*

U S E.

What do you think concerning the coming of Christ? do you love to hear of it? if

if you are true Christians, you believe he will come ; but do you long for his coming, and are you prepared for that day ? do you pray for his coming ? do you say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly ?*

Do you expect to be called to an account when our Lord comes ? he will reckon with all his Servants, you will be asked how you have improved your time, your strength, your wealth, your parts, your gifts and your graces ; be persuaded to manage things so well now, and make such Improvement of the talents you have to his glory, that you may be willing to give up your Accounts to him : And this brings to the next words.

And so he that had received five Talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord thou deliveredst to me five talents, behold I have gained other five talents more. Vers. 20.

He also that had received the two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst to me two talents, behold I have gained other two talents besides them, &c. Vers. 22.

We may note from hence,

- 1 Doct. That Jesus Christ hath some faithful Servants.
- 2 Doct. That a faithful Servant of Christ freely acknowledgeth all things whatsoever he hath received of Jesus Christ.

Deut. 4.9 What every true Christian hath received, he owns, and is ready to acknowledge it ; Lord, thou gavest me my precious Soul, indued me with reason, wisdom and knowledge, and gavest me the charge of it, to keep it with utmost diligence, and to see it well cloathed, fed, healed, cleansed, sanctified, adorned, refreshed and comforted ; thou gavest me the riches of the world, and much health, and many Children ; thou gavest me the Gospel, and a gracious ministration thereof ; thou gavest me many gifts, and many choice graces, thou gavest me a time of great Gospel Light, and sweet Liberty to worship thee, thou gavest me great dignity and honour in thy House, thou gavest me many precious Promises and blessed Ordinances, I was placed in a high Station among thy people.

Whatever they have received, they readily confess and acknowledge it to the Lord Jesus ; his Lord and he agree in their Accounts, he is charged with receiving five talents, and says, *Lord thou deliveredst to me five talents.* Some now are not ready to confess what talents they have received, no, but seem to lessen them, as if they had not that time, that strength, that wisdom, that wealth, and those advantages and opportunities of doing good

and of serving Christ, his People and Interest, as indeed they have ; and this gives great ground to fear that they are not faithful Servants. Again

I have gained besides them five Talents.

Note,

- 2 Doct. That a faithful servant of Christ is ready to produce the Increase, as well as the principle Stock first received..

In speaking to this,

1. *I shall shew what may be meant by gaining five and two Talents more.*

2. *Apply it.*

1. It may denote an equal improvement of every particular Talent ; he had not only improved one Talent, and omitted to trade with and improve another, to the honour of his great Master ; no, but he had improved every one which he had received : Not only his Temporal or Earthly good things, but his Spiritual good things ; and not only his spiritual good things, but his earthly or temporal good things likewise : He was not only faithful in much, but in that also which was the least. Some perhaps may improve their spiritual gifts, be ready to instruct others in spiritual things, and help them that way, nay may be they are very forward to be Preachers, none perhaps have greater Zeal that way than they ; but God having given them also a Talent of earthly Riches to improve, or a considerable portion of the good things of this World, but that they improve not ; no, tho the Ministers of Christ and the Poor want, they pretend they can't give, can't spare their Money, no, that they keep for themselves, and convert it all to their own use : Now these discover they are unfaithful Servants, every Talent proportionably is not improved.

And in like manner another may be ready to improve a Talent which he hath received, the Improvement of which not exposing him to any outward loss, but he having the Word of God to attend upon, and the Talent of Time and Opportunity to attend thereon, and strength and ability to visit the sick, or look after the concerns of the Church ; but that talent he has no heart to improve, pretends he can't spare his time : as if his Time was not his Lords Goods, and chiefly to be taken up in his Service, to his Honour, and to the good and profit of his People ; now this manifesteth the baseness of the mans heart ; if he hath five Talents given him, he would never gain other five, viz. equally improve every one, and make them double, or at least wise make great increase, satisfactory increase of each in particular.

Quest.

Quest. *Wherein doth the gain by his improving his Talents consist?*

Ans. In three or four things:

Wherein
Christs
faithful
Servants
double their
Talents.

2 Pet. 1.
5, 6, 7.

1. They gain *for themselves*. (1) They gain more spiritual Knowledge; by Exercise they *increase* in the Knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) In their Gifts. (3) In Grace; they make their small Faith to become a great Faith; they gain also more Love, more Patience, more Meekness, and more Humility; they *add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity*. In these things they abound, and in these things their gain does consist. (4) They also gain double Experiences of God in all his ways, Ordinances and Providences.

2 Cor. 1. 4.

2ly, Others also gain by them. (1) They that want spiritual Strength, spiritual Comfort, are both strengthened and comforted by *them with the same comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God*. Others receive an equal portion of comfort by improving their Stock. (2) They that want Light, being very ignorant of God and of Christ, they by improving their Knowledge in instructing them, gain perhaps in a little time as good an understanding as themselves, nay perhaps do exceed them thro Gods blessing their Endeavours. (3) Others who are poor and want the good things of the World, gain a comfortable supply of whatsoever they need, by their free contributing to them out of the Talent or Stock they received; and to others they perhaps lend Five, Ten, Twenty, or a Hundred pounds, and so put some in such a way to live, that in a few years they grow as **rich as** they themselves, and so their **Talent is** just doubled.

1 Pet. 2.
15.

3ly, God also by the Improvement of their Talents gains Honour to his great Name. (1) This is done when by their means many poor Souls are gained to Christ, by their holy Doctrine, and holy Lives and Conversations. (2) When by their means Religion is commended, gains honour and reputation in the world. (3) When the Church of God by the care and faithfulness of his Servants, is increased, preserved in Love, Unity and sweet Concord, and flourishes in all the fruits of Righteousness. O what glory doth hereby redound unto God! (4) When by your holy and shining Conversations the mouths of such that scoff at Religion are stop'd. *For so is the will of God that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*. Christs Servants by carrying it wisely towards all men, submitting to every Ordinance of Man not repugnant to the

Word of God, and in living godly and pious Lives, bring double Honour unto God; for, 1. They hereby stop the mouths of some; and 2. Are Instruments to convert others. (5.) Hereby also they gain a double Reward to themselves at the great day; for, according to every Servants Improvements of his Talents, our Lord shews such shall his Honour be when his Lord cometh.

APPLICATION.

1. We infer from hence, that true Grace is of a most excellent nature, it is a fruitful seed; for in whomsoever it is sown, if cherished, it brings forth plentifully.

2. This also shews that such who are sincere and faithfull Servants of Jesus Christ, they equally improve every Talent which they are intrusted with, they will not offer unto the Lord that which cost them nothing, but do honour the Lord with their substance, their time, their strength and their wealth is all improved to the Honour of God, and the good of his people.

3. We also infer, that according to the quality and quantity of those Talents we have received, Christ looks for our Improvement of them; he that hath received *five*, it is not enough to trade with *two* or *three* of them, and never improve the other; no, every one according to the nature of it must be laid out and used for the Honour of our blessed Master the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Let Churches from hence learn to take notice who they are that have received any considerable Talent, and observe whether they do faithfully improve them, whether their Talents consist in Spiritual or Earthly good things. Moreover, if they find some do not do it, they ought to lay their sin before them, and labour to convince them of their evil, and if they persist in a continual neglect after all due means used, they ought to deal with them for their unfaithfulness to Christ and to his People; is it not strange that none are brought under a Church Censure for the horrible sin of Covetousness; is there any Instance in this case to be given? Certainly either there are no Members of our Congregations herein guilty, or else there hath been too palpable Omissions of the discharge of Duty herein.

5. Moreover, it may severely tend to reprove those Ministers and Churches who have profitable Gifts among them, which if called out to the exercise of those Gifts and Talents, might be a great blessing to the Churches, and Interest of Christ in the present and future time: Why were those Ministerial Gifts or Talents given? were they not to the end

Churches
reproved
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Christ

Christ might by them receive glory, and the Church and Souls of men profit; perhaps the evil does not lie in the persons themselves; for they may say, Would you have us impose our selves or our gifts upon the Church, or run before we are sent; we must be try'd, and have the regular Call of the Church, before we undertake to preach; besides, no man is a competent Judge of his own abilities for the Ministry.

6. We may also, perceive from hence how acceptable and well-pleasing a thing it is in the eyes of our Blessed Lord, to see every one of his Servants to improve their respective Talents, to the end he gave them.

Well done good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, Verse 23.

See the high commendation Christ gives to these Servants, *Good and faithful Servant*: None is originally, essentially and perfectly good but God alone; Goodness here refers to a mans Sincerity and serviceableness; he that is a faithful, true and laborious Servant, we call a good Servant, in contradistinction to a slothful and evil Servant. 'Tis said *Barnabas was a good man*, &c. That is a very sincere and godly man, one full of Zeal and of the Holy Ghost. The acceptableness of the uttermost Improvement of our Talents in Christs sight, appears,

1. In that Commendation he gave him in calling him a good and faithful Servant.

2. In that he makes him Ruler over many great things, that had only been faithful over a few things; the Lord Jesus hath not made our burden under the Gospel hard; no, his burden is light comparatively to the bearing of the Duty and Ordinances under the Law. O what a multitude of Statutes, Laws and Ordinances were given to the Jews and Jewish Church! and this will tend to aggravate their sin, who refuse to obey the Lord Christ in some of those few things required of us them.

3. In letting him into his Masters Joy; for tho it was not the faithfulness of the Servant that gave him a title, and entrance into this Joy, yet Christ takes his faithful Obedience as well, as if he had procured thereby a Title to Heaven; nay perhaps more kindly, because it was love to his Master, and respect to his Name and Glory, that was the great Motive of his Obedience and faithfulness.

Ruler over many things.

Note from hence,

Doct. That Christ make his Saints and faithful Servants Rulers, yea Rulers over many things.

1. They shall reign and rule with Jesus Christ; the Government of all the Earth shall be given to the Saints; they shall not only a thousand years inherit the Earth, but shall be Kings and Rulers.

And thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the Earth. Rev. 5.10.

And again it is said, — *and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* Rev. 20.4.

Over many things, i. e. Over many Nations, and over many People. *A King shall reign in Righteousness, and Princes shall decree justice.* Compare these Scriptures with that in Daniel: — *And the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heavens shall be given to the People of the Saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all Dominions shall serve and obey him.* Dan. 7. 27.

Some think that all the Kingdoms of the Earth shall be given to the Saints before Christ comes. No doubt but there will be a glorious State of the Church in the last dayes, that now draw very near, and will commence at the sounding of the *Seventh Trumpet*; but the peaceable and universal Reign will not be untill the King comes: for Daniel and all the Saints that are fallen asleep, shall have their Lot in Rule, Government, Reign and Glory of the Kingdom of our blessed Lord. Dan. 12.

Enter into the Joy of thy Lord!

The Joy of our Lord is too great to enter into us, and therefore we shall enter into that. It is our Masters Joy:

(1) That Joy he hath procured for us, thro his sorrow and sufferings. (2) 'Tis his, because given and granted to us by the Lord Christ, 'tis he that hath the only power to give it. (3) It may be called *our Masters Joy*, because in its Nature or Quality, it will be the same he now himself swims in, or is possessed with, and filled full of, viz. Heavenly Joy.

(1) It will be great Joy as it is Heavenly, so it will be exceeding great, even *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* (2) It will be Soul-satisfying, and Soul-ravishing Joy. (3) It will be unmixed Joy, Joy without sorrow, and Light without Darkness. (4) It will be Everlasting Joy: *They shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and sighing shall flie away.* O who is able to conceive, much less to express the nature or greatness and sweetness of the Joys of Heaven! Isa. 35.10.

USE.

1. What Fools are those poor wretches, who so much are taken with, and delighted in earthly Joys, which as they are but for a moment, so they are full of mixture of sorrow and misery, and can give no person ease and satisfaction.

X x x x x x

2. But

2. But what Fools are they then who value the Joys and pleasures of Sin above the Joys of Heaven, and resolve they will not part with their brutish lusts, tho they never taste of the Joys of our Lord, but expose their Souls to eternal pain and sorrow in Hell.

3. May not the Joys of our Lord provoke us his Servants to be very faithful and industrious in his Service? No doubt but this was left on record on purpose to be a Motive to press us to holy diligence, and faithfulness in the work of the Lord, our labour shall not be in vain. O what wonderful Rewards will the Rewards of Grace be! Certainly there are none wise but such who condemn the glory of this World, and all the vain and sinful Joys and Delights thereof; they that have tasted how good the Lord is, or have tasted of Heaven, cannot but prefer the blessed God above ten thousand Worlds. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? neither is there any on Earth that I desire besides thee.*

4. Be exhorted ye that are Christs Servants not to faint in your Minds, nor be discouraged, tho you meet with sorrow here; for your sorrow will be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you. Your Sorrows are but for a moment, but your Joys will be for ever, and the greater sorrows you meet with in this World for Christs sake, or bear patiently to his praise, the greater and sweeter will your Joy be hereafter.

5. What folly then are they guilty of, that hide their Talent in the Earth! they choose to trade for the Earth rather than Heaven; that Talent that should be improved for the good of their Souls they hide in the Earth.

SERMON XXXI.

Matth. XXV. 21.

His Lord said, Well done good and faithful Servant, &c.

WE are not a little pleased when our Parents say, Well done my good Child, or a Master says, Well done good and faithful Servant; but what is it then to have the praise of Christ?

Note,

Doct. That the consideration of Christs commendation of his Servants faithfulness, should move the Hearts of all his servants to holy diligence and faithfulness in improving their Talents.

Quest. What Talents ought they with their uttermost care and faithfulness to improve.

Answ. I answer:

1. The talent of Time: Time is a most precious thing, which God bestows upon all, tho to some a larger Talent of time than to others.

Time may be considered as twofold.

1. Time it self.

2. The Opportunity of time.

1. *The time of Youth.* Some have the time of their Youthful dayes, tho others have lost that time and cannot recall it, and now mourn to think how foolishly they wasted and consumed those precious days, without bringing glory unto God, or reaping profit and comfort to their own Souls, but contrariwise greatly dishonoured their blessed Lord and Master.

I have shewed in opening of another Parable, how the Time of Youth should be improved. God calls for this Time: *Remember Now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth, before the evil days come, &c.* Of all persons, such who improve the days of their Youth, are accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ. *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.*

2ly, *The time of Health:* Before Sicknes and bodily distempers take hold of us; many have by Sicknes, lameness, or one distemper or another, been taken off, being in no capacity to attend upon the Word and means of Grace. Moreover Experience shews how unable in Sicknes and under pains and diseases, we are to dedicate our selves to the work and service of Christ, or to discharge the Duties of Religion; we have then enough to do to bewail our selves, and to bear up under our Infirmities; therefore whilest Health and Strength lasteth, we should, with all our might, do whatsoever the Lord requires of us.

Secondly, *The Opportunity of time* should be improved.

We have many Opportunities allowed us, or particular seasons and advantages put into our hand: *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? Why have we so many Opportunities to attend upon the Ministry of the Word, who have no heart to lay our earthly business aside, and diligently wait upon God in those Opportunities.* O how would some in other Nations rejoice, and prize such seasons which we in and about this City have afforded us; nay, many poor hungry souls in some dark Corners of this Kingdom would not a little rejoyce could they be intrusted with this Talent; some go six, nay ten miles to hear a Sermon, and yet can't perhaps have such Opportunities but once in a month, while we have

See the Parable of hiring Labourers in the vineyard. Mat. 20. Eccl. 12. 1. Prov. 8. 17.

The Opportunity of time must be improved. Prov. 17. 16

have them every day in the Week; but alas, alas, many will not go out of their Houses, nor leave their earthly Concerns for one Hour in the Week, tho the Word is preached, very near their Dwellings; I am afraid this sort will not be able to give a good Account to their Lord when he comes, about their improving of this Talent; they shew that they hunger not for the Word of God, nor rejoyce at it as one that finds great Spoil, as holy David did; neither do they prize a meeting with Christ, or Communion with Christ in his Ordinances; for hath he not promised to be in the midst of them that are met together in his Name; besides they consider not what Reproach hereby they cast upon the Worship of God, and what Grief they bring upon his People, especially his Ministers; they are commanded to preach the Word out of Season as well as in Season; and is it not, my Brethren, your Duty as much to hear it out of Season, as ours to preach it? and do you not hereby shew to all that you prefer the gain of the World above the gain of the Word. Alas man knowes not his time, he considers not the Worth of time, nor knows how short his time may be; he may also perhaps have a Heart to improve Opportunities of time hereafter, when he may not have Opportunities to improve: they might learn more Wisdom by the children of men. Husband-men improve the time of sowing, and the time of reaping. Trades-men observe their Fairs and Markets, and Merchants their Exchange-time; nay, the Bees and Ants observe the time to labour, and provide in Summer against the Winter. If men lose the proper Seasons and Opportunities of Improvements, in vain do they think to thrive.

The convictions of the conscience, and the movings of the Spirit of God should be improved.

Thirdly, Every man and woman should labour to improve the Helps God affords them to the great end of glorifying God. (1) The Dictates and Convictions of their own Consciences. (2) The Reproofs of his holy Spirit:—may be Conscience accuses and convinces a man of this or that sin, he hath committed, or of this or that Duty or holy Ordinance he hath omitted, and the Spirit under the Word severely reproves them also, and yet they neglect, slight and quench the Spirit, and seek to stifle their own Consciences, which to do is an abominable Evil, and dangerous also; for if those Convictions go off, it may be long before they find them again: When a fire is almost gone quite out, it may cost much pains and blowing before it kindle again. A Mariner, if he loseth a fair Wind, he may lose his Voyage.

Fourthly, All that Light, Knowledge and those Gifts God hath given to us, we must improve, wherefore were these Talents

given? But this I have spoken largely to in opening another Parable.

Fifthly, Are you intrusted with a portion of the good things of this World? you have heard this Talent God expects that you should improve to his Glory; and to the carrying on and supporting his Interest in the World, and also his Ministers and poor Members, that which they are to have, he hath put it into your hands, and made you his Stewards of it, and if you fail or be unfaithful in the discharging your Duties, so that the cause of God languisheth in your Hands, his poor Ministers discouraged, wanting what is necessary, and his poor want Bread to eat; you will have a sad Account one day to give to your great Master. Will a man rob God? Methinks that high Commendation Christ gives his faithful Servants, should set you on fire to do your utmost in distributing your Lords Money to his Children that need it; Well done, good and faithful Servant.

Sixthly, The Talent of special Grace, nay, every Grace of the Spirit, must be improved. *Grace must be improved.*

1. Indeed Grace is the chiefest Talent, the best of our Masters Goods, and it is a Talent also (you have heard) which he doth not intrust all men with; no, none but such he hath a particular or special Love unto. Brethren,

Our Faith and other Graces may be but small or weak at first, but by a due Improving of them, they may in time grow strong, and flourish in our Souls. Paul observed after what a precious manner the Faith of the Saints at Thessalonica grew: We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is meet, because that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the Charity of every one of you towards each other aboundeth. *2 Thes. 1. 3*

The way how Grace comes to grow, may be twofold.

(1) By Gods infusing new Degrees of it, or further Measures, and so adding to the first Stock.

(2) By their daily Exercise, for that way Grace is augmented, and grows in Believers also: Indeed he that improves the Grace he hath, God hath promised to give more Grace unto: But he giveth more Grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble; such shall be helped to mortify sin, to resist Satans Temptations, and to discharge acceptably all religious Duties, and to bear all Reproaches and heavy Burdens for Christs sake. *Jam. 4. 6.*

2. But by the Non-improvement of Grace, that which we have may be much spent and wasted.

3. Consider, what great Advantages we have in order to growth in Grace; what

what fruitful Seasons, fruitful shinings, and fruitful showers; the Sun approacheth near, and shines hot on us, beyond what it doth may be on thousands. And God affording such Seasons of Grace, expecteth suitable Improvements of grace:

Isa. 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard which I have not done in it?*

4. We had better loss, wast, and decay in our earthly Substance a thousand times, than to wast or decay in grace, Zeal and Holiness: Also a Saint may so far decline or decay in Faith and other graces, that he may fear he hath not one dram of it left in him, and so fall under great Darknes and Despondency, so as to cry out with Job, *My hope is cut off.*

5. Moreover, according to our growth and Increase in grace, will our Peace, Joy and Consolation be; would you lose that thro' Slothfulness and Neglect of Improvement of your Strength and Time, and Opportunities in one year, that you did not arrive at until many years passed over your Heads?

Quest. *What hinders our growth in Grace?*

1. *Ans.* Giving way to those fleshly Lusts that war against the Soul; also a neglect of a holy and diligent Watch over our own Hearts, or not endeavouring to mortify sin, but let the weeds of vain thoughts to lodge in us, greatly tends to the Decay of Faith, and weakens all grace in our Souls.

1 Pet. 2. 11

2. By letting earthly things take up too much room in our Hearts, by giving way to inordinate Desires after Riches or about the Cares of this World.

3. By grieving the holy Spirit, by which means he may withdraw his sweet influences, whereby all grace is strengthened. Indeed no grace can thrive when the holy Spirit is withdrawn from a poor Believer.

4. Or it may be thro' neglect of Prayer, hearing the Word, Meditation and Christian Converse: Can the Babe grow that refuseth the Breast? We should as newborn Babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

5. By preferring worldly gain above spiritual gain and Profit; a little of the World will not satisfy some Professors; no, they can be better satisfied with a little Faith, a little Zeal for God, a little Holiness, than with a little Gold and Silver. God from hence may blast them in their gifts, and cause their grace to decay. When men do not increase in their Bounty to Gods People, he lets them decay and wither in their Souls, and sometimes in their Trades and Estate also.

Quest. *How should all our Talents be improved?*

1. With uttermost Care and Diligence; Eccl. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth do do, do it with thy might, &c.* It is said that Mary did what she could; it is the diligent Hand that maketh rich; thro' Slothfulness the evil Servant failed, and his Unfaithfulness consisted partly in his Negligence.

2. According to the Degree and Measure every one hath received, (as before I shewed you,) he that hath five Talents must improve those five, and he that hath received two, must improve those two, and he that received one, must improve that one.

3. All the Talents we have received, must be improved so as to answer the End for which they were given.

(1) To the Honour and Glory God, this is the first and main End why God gave Talents to his Servants.

(2) To the good of others, even the good of all men, but especially the People of God.

Hast thou the true Knowledge of God in a greater Degree or Measure of it than others, thou must not conceal or hide this Talent, but when Opportunity presents thou must speak for God. Perhaps,

1st. Thou mayst be cast where some may make violent Opposition against some main Truths of Christ, or Points of Faith, and thou art by, now if thou holdest thy Peace, and let the Truth suffer, and yet art able to maintain and defend it, thou mayst be decm'd to hide thy Talent; therefore then thou must stand up for thy Masters Cause, and with all Wisdom plead for that Truth thou seest is opposed, and neither be afraid nor ashamed tho it may be to thy outward loss: shall Truth suffer thro' thy silence?

2^{ly}, Or thou mayst be cast among poor ignorant Persons, who know not Jesus Christ, and if thou seest they are willing to be informed, thou must improve thy Talent to their Instruction and Profit; but be sure thou dost it in all sincerity of Heart, in Love to God and to their precious Souls, and not to be taken Notice of, or to get Applause of men, or out of vain glory.

3^{ly}, Let it be our Care to instruct the Ignorant, and to reduce such, if possible, that are gone astray, and led into Errors, or corrupted with Heresie; and also

4^{ly}, To strengthen those that are weak, and confirm the feeble minded, and such that are wavering.

5^{ly}, To succour such that are tempted or in Trouble.

6^{ly}, To comfort such that are dejected or cast down in their Spirits.

7^{ly}, To encourage the fearful in a day of Persecution. And

8^{ly}, To reprove Backbiters and Tale-bearers, and rebuke the unruly and such that

that go on impudently in sin and ungodly courses.

goly, To do what lies in us to quicken the slothful, and exhort them to their duties, and in all things to seek the Peace and Good of that Church where God hath set us, and that God in all things may be glorified.

Thirdly, We must so improve our Talents, that we may be ready to give up our Accounts with Joy, that we may hear our blessed Lord say to us when he comes; *Well done, good and faithful Servants.*

U S E.

This tends to reprove all such that never consider what Talents they are which they have received, neither regard the due Improvement of them.

Also it reproves such that are slothful or negligent in their Duties, or barren Persons, or like Israel of old, empty Vines, that bring forth fruit to themselves; as if their Time, Strength, Knowledge, Wealth, and all they are intrusted with, was their own, and should never be called to an Account about the Improvement or Non-improvement of them.—

But to proceed.

Then he which had received the one Talent, came and said, Lord, I knew that thou wert an hard man, &c. ver. 24. And I was afraid, and hid thy Talent, lo there thou hast that is thine, ver. 25.

And his Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful Servant, &c. ver. 26.

Note from hence.

Doct. That he that improveth not that talent God gave him, but hideth it, is a wicked and slothful Servant, he is charged with slothfulness.

In speaking to this I shall do two things.

1. Shew wherein the Wickedness of this Servant consisteth.

2. Give you the Character of a slothful person.

1. He is a wicked Person, and part of his Wickedness lies in his Slothfulness. All men in the whole World are of two sorts, godly or wicked, good or bad, Believers or Unbelievers. Also Christs domestick Servants, those of his own House are also of two sorts, either faithful or slothful Servants, wise or foolish, Sheeps or Goats, Wheat or Tares.

2. The Wickedness of the slothful Servant lies in hiding his Talent in the Earth, viz. in his Earthliness, or in preferring outward or external things above those things that are spiritual and eternal, or in loving of this World above the Love and Favour of God.

3. In his charging God with Injustice, or being hard and cruel, laying the cause of their Destruction upon God himself, in commanding them to do that which

they have no Power to do; whereas the holy God sheweth that he will pass the Sentence against them for their non-improving the Talent he gave unto them.

Thou knewest that I reaped where I sowed not.

It is spoken Ironically; well, if this were so, yet shall I therefore not reap where I did sow? It is the Genius of wicked men to have hard thoughts of God, and to lay the Blame of their Miscarriages upon God himself; *I should do better if God would but give me grace:* such seem to dread Injustice in God rather than his Justice, whereas God could as soon cease to be, as cease to be just and righteous.

4. *Ironical Reprehensions* or Rebukes of God set forth, is dreadful Displeasure; can the blessed Jesus bear the falsehood or misrepresentations of wicked men: *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them (that is thy sins) in order before thine eyes.* — *Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

5. The Wickedness of unfaithful or slothful Servants consisteth in their slighting the Lord Jesus Christ thro' their unreasonable Unbelief: *Ye have said it is vain to serve God, and what Profit is it we have kept his Ordinances? &c.* They think all that is done in the Service of God is lost labour, neither bringing Profit to God, nor any to themselves; better sit still, or hide our talents, and do nothing, than to do it to no purpose: — *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not, wherefore have we afflicted our Souls? &c.* They complain (like this wicked Servant) of hard usage from God, tho they did nothing in a right manner, from a right Spirit or Principle, nor to a right end, yet would be rewarded for their base and hypocritical Services they had done.

Had the wicked Servant believed what his great Master had done, and rested wholly upon him, or believed in him, tho there was no Reward for his own Work, yet Love to his Lord would have engaged his Heart, and drawn him forth to have done his uttermost to the Glory and Honour of his blessed Master. The more severe wicked men apprehend God is, the more careful and strict they should be to improve their time and talents; for if they look upon him as a hard man, or a Usurer, they might from thence learn to bring him the more Increase, so that out of their own mouths they will be condemned: What have they such thoughts of Christ, and yet trade not at all, but return back only the principal Stock? *Take that which is thine.*

Quest. *How can a Sinner give or restore that to Christ he received of him.*

Y y y y y

Ans.

Pr 50.21, 22.

Mal. 3.14.

Isa. 58.3.

The wicked servant will be condemned out of his own mouth.

Ans. Here lies an absolute Disparity, a disparity in this Parable, and not only in this, but also in some other things, it runs not on *all four*; For tho it is true, a Servant among men may return the principal Stock back to his Lord, of which he made no Improvement, yet sinners cannot be said thus to do; for they like the *Prodigal* (as they improve not what they have) so they wast what was first delivered to them.

6. The wickedness of this Servant consisted in saying in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, (as our Saviour shews in another place;) this wicked person certainly thought his Lord would never come again, he being so long gone. Now this is an abominable evil, considering the repeated Promises our Saviour has made of his *second coming*; it is indeed to charge Christ with Breach of his Promise, and his Word not to be believed.

Secondly, *How may a slothful and wicked Servant be known?*

The Character of a wicked and slothful servant.

Ans. 1. By his Negligence in and about the Lords Work; he is a wicked Servant that basely omits or neglects the Service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and has his Heart much more set upon his own worldly Business; he crys I have Business of great moment to do, I can't come, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, I must go and prove them; I have, another faith, bought a Farm, and I must needs go and see it: And, faith a third, I have married a Wife, (one perhaps that is an Enemy to Religion) and I cannot come.

2. He is such a Person whose Heart is wicked, he being never changed or renewed by the Spirit of God; and therefore one that remains in the Old Nature, having Enmity in his carnal mind against God, being filled with Uncleanness, Unrighteousness, and Covetousness, whose God is his Belly, and that glories in his shame, minding earthly things; every wicked Servant is not to the like Degree openly prophane: For some of Christs domestick Servants, such I mean that are Members of the visible Church, are wicked and slothful Servants; yet these are more close and secretly wicked, and some of them not known or discerned to be such persons, yet they may be partly discovered by their proud, niggardly and covetous Tempers, and by their neglect of the most hard and difficultest Part and Duties of Religion, being not indeed and in Truth what they profess to be, nor the same abroad and in the Closet, which they are thought, or taken to be by some, if not generally by all, yet their idle, slothful Disposition manifesteth they are wicked Persons.

Qest. *How is that known?*

1. A slothful Person is soon weary; if you set him on Work, he is tyred presently, he takes no Delight in his Work, and thus we find God complains of some, *Ye said also, Behold, what weariness is it,* Mal. 1. 13, *and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this at your hands? saith the Lord.* It seems to me, that which made them weary of Gods Service, was partly the great Charge that attended his Altars and Sanctuary, they would not bring the best of their Flock and herd, and therefore saith the Lord; *Cursed be the deceiver which bath in his flock a male,* Ver. 14, *and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing, &c.*

Thus some in Gods House grow weary of his Service, the Charge is too great for their carnal Hearts, and tho they offer the lame and the blind, I mean some small matter, yet they are weary in doing so much; they can keep good Tables, and clothe themselves and Children in rich Cloathing, and spend Pounds idly on unnecessary Occasions, but one Shilling once in the Week to Christ is too much, they are weary, and so render themselves wicked and slothful Servants.

2ly, A slothful Servant neglects his Vineyard and his Fields: *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the Vineyard of the man void of understanding—and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the Face thereof.* Pro. 24. 30. 31.

Just thus it is with a wicked and slothful Servant of Christ, or one that professeth himself so to be, he neglects his own Vineyard; I mean his own Heart, he labours not to mortifie his sins and inordinate Lusts and Desires, but lets the Weeds and Nettles of Corruption grow therein, and earthly Thoughts are given way to, also he neglects praying, hearing and Meditation, alas, he has no time for such Duties, his own Business is so great that lies on his Hands; and this shews that he is a wicked and slothful Servant.

3ly, A sluggard or slothful Person is ready to make many Excuses, and small matters hinder him from attending upon the Worship of God.

The slothful man saith, There is a Lion in the way, I shall be slain in the streets.—He dreams of Danger when none is near; what Lion or Devil should hinder us from attending upon our Lords Works? But this is indeed a ground to fear, a Lion hath got hold of him, i. e. Satan by his Temptations is too hard for him, but this Lion he sees not; no, it is a Lion of another Nature which he fears.

4ly, A slothful Persons Endeavours are not agreeable to his Desires: *The Desires of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse* Pro. 21. 25.

A slothful person desires, but his endeavours are not agreeable to his desires. to labour, he coveteth greedily all the day long, &c. He is a man of Desires, but no man of Endeavours; his Desire torments him almost to death, whilst he passionately desires that Peace and Satisfaction which he hath not, nor is ever like to find unless his mind was changed; he desires inward Joy, and fain would be saved: *Let me die the death of the Righteous, let my last end be like his;* but he will take no pains to procure what he desires, nor improve the means to so great an End: And this his Idleness exposeth him to Want, and so to Death; it will kill him at last, or be the cause of his Damnation; *he coveteth greedily all the day long.* If Desires, Wishes and Wouldings would procure what he wants without Endeavours, he would be a happy man; he is not like David, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after,* &c. He did not desire it only, but he resolved that his Endeavours should be according to his Desires; and thus the Prophet *Isaiah* speaketh also; *With my Soul have I desired thee in the night.* Well, was that all? did he only desire God? no, see his next Words; *And with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early,* most affectionately and sincerely, and also timely; he desired and longed for the Lord, and his Endeavours were suitable to his Desires; and thus the Spouse acted also, she desired her Beloved, and she rose to seek him, and never rested untill she had found him; but this a slothful person does not, and as his Endeavours are not for Christ, so also his Desires are not after Christ neither; no, but only after Salvation; he would be saved, but loves not the Saviour so much as he loves the World; he is for the Portion, but cares not for the Person.

Pro. 6. 6. 5ly, A slothful person cries, *Yet a little more sleep, yet a little slumber;* just thus some Professors cry in their Hearts, a little more Liberty to pursue the World, I will be more diligent in Christs Service, and thoughtful of his Church, but at present O let me have a little more Rest, dispense with my Omissions a little while longer; and thus they slumber and sleep away their time, which should be improved to the Honour of Christ, and to the good of his People, and the Salvation of their own Souls, until Poverty and Destruction comes upon them: *So thy Poverty shall come upon thee as one that travelleth,* &c. that is swiftly, and unexpectedly, and unavoidably, no escaping it.

Pro. 25. 26. 6ly, A wicked and slothful Person is confident of the goodness of his own estate; *The Sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a Reason;* he may say, Christ is his Hope, 'tis on his Righteousness, or that he dependeth upon Christ alone; and saith, *He is*

rich, and increased with goods, and hath need Rev. 3. 17 *of nothing,* &c. alas, sin is a small thing in his sight, and he troubles not himself about Duties of Religion, nor perhaps loves to hear the Doctrine of Sanctification and inherent Holiness preached. Sirs, I am afraid many of this sort will appear slothful Servants when our Lord comes; for he that loves not the Doctrine of Holiness, loves not be sure the practice of Holiness. Come, such persons who exalt their own Wisdom and Knowledge above others, and are proud and conceited of their Parts and Attainments, and magnifie their Wisdom above *seven wise men,* (that is the perfect Body of Orthodox Christians,) that can give a Reason sufficient to convince them of their Errors; have a black Character upon them, for tho they live in sin and are ungodly, yet are confident of their Salvation.

7ly, A slothful Person cannot encounter with Difficulties; *the Sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore he shall beg in Harvest, and have nothing:* It is not said in Winter he shall beg, but in Harvest, which I conceive refers to the great Harvest-day, viz. the End of the World, which our Lord calls the *Harvest;* such that labour not now to plow up the fallow ground of their Hearts, and sow to the Spirit, shall in that Harvest-day cry, *Lord, Lord!* but tho they then beg, they shall have nothing: These Persons hate, and strive to avoid all laborious and difficult work, tho there is a Necessity of it to be done. If an Idle Faith, a presumptuous Faith, or Faith without works, will serve their Turn; they have got that, but none of that Faith that purifies the Heart, and that leads them to *deny themselves, and to take up their Cross and follow* Mat. 16. 24. *Christ.* But these things are too hard for them, they must be saved in an easier way, they cannot enter in at this strait gate, nor walk in this narrow way, they can't bear the cold blasts of Afflictions, Temptations, Reproaches and Persecution.

8ly, A slothful Person feeds not upon that which he hath gotten: *The slothful man roseth not that which he hath took in hunting.* *Pro. 12. 27.* Some think, *Solomon* meaneth that which he hath got unjustly, or by fraudulent Practices; but this I humbly conceive, is not meant hereby; but rather when a man hath got by his endeavour the things of this World, he does not live upon them, he enjoys not the fruit of his Labour, tho he may catch *Venison,* yet lives upon mean Diet: So some spiritual slothful persons, they may hunt for food for their Souls, go and hear this and that Minister, and search the Scripture to know the way of Life; but when they have attained to some great Degree of Light and Knowledge,

ledge, may be know Christ only is the way, yet they believe not on him; they find by hunting this and that Promise, but do not make food of it, i. e. do not by Faith apply those Promises to their own Souls; also they see this and that Ordinance Christ hath appointed, but they obey them not, submit not to them, and also they find there are such and such severe Threatnings pronounced against all Unbelievers, impenitent and disobedient Persons, but they fear them not; and thus the slothful Servant roseth not what he hath took in hunting.

9ly, The way of the Lord to a slothful person is as an Hedge of Thorns, that is, it is grievous to him, or there are in it such Difficulties, that he despaireth to pass thro', and never striveth to overcome them: *The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns.* The holy Ghost alludes to that way, which he ought to walk in, 'tis grievous to him, like pricking Thorns: now the Reason of this is because his Heart is not changed, for all Believers found, before they received the Grace of God, and were renewed, how grievous the work of Religion was to them: The old Nature hates true Piety; be-

cause the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: but the way of the Righteous is made plain. — And hence the

beloved Disciple saith, *And his Commandments are not grievous.* They that are true Believers, having obtained a new Nature and sincere Love to Jesus Christ, the hardest Command is easie and not grievous to them, tho it may be hard to the fleshly or unrenewed part, yet after the inward man they delight in the Law of God; and this shews the absolute Necessity there is of Regeneration, and what a woful state such are in, who only have their Understandings somewhat enlightened, but have not their Hearts, their Wills, and their Affections renewed or changed, for Religion is but a burden to them; and this discovers that vast Difference there is between a true, sanctified person, and all others.

10ly, Slothful persons live not up to what they know of God, they do not improve their uttermost Strength and Abilities, but know more than they will do; and this our Lord shews very clearly in this Parable, in respect of this wicked Servant; they do not bring up the bottom of their lives to the top of their Lights, as 'tis impossible to obey the Truth, and not to know it, so to know the Truth, and not to obey it, is unprofitable: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Divine Knowledge (saith one) is not like the light of the Moon, to sleep by; but it's like the light of the Sun to work by; it is not a Loyerer in the Market-place, but a Laborer in the Vineyard. A man may be a great Scholar, and yet be a great sinner; Judas was a Preacher, and yet a Traitor: Many Professors know what is to be done, but never do what is to be known.

Thus I have given you the Character of the wicked and slothful Servant.

Take therefore the Talent from him, and give it to him that hath the ten Talents; for unto every one that hath, shall be given, but from him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath, ver. 29, 30.

The taking away of his Talent (saith one) and the taking him away from his Talent, is all one: Our Lord no doubt means he shall be stript of all Christ gave him, even his very Soul shall be required of him, and he shall never be trusted any more; this is done at death, and will appear to be fully done in the day of Judgment. Tho God sometimes before discovers some men to be Hypocrites, and all they boasted of, seems then to be taken away, they are utterly blasted, &c.

A Dispar.

And give it to him that hath ten. In this there is also a Disparity; we are therefore only to attend on the Scope and Design of our Lord in these Words. A Lord among men it is true, may take the Money, or Talent he gave to an unfaithful Servant, and give it to another; but I see not how the Talent our Lord refers to, can be

given to another; neither ought Parables to be strained after such a manner, that in all things they must run parallel-wise, and they that see not this, let them remain blind.

1. We are to learn from hence, that whatsoever wicked men have of earthly things, or common Talents, they shall lose it, or be dispossessed of all they had.

2. That, tho Christs faithful Servants shall not receive an addition from those that were wicked, yet that the industrious and faithful Christian shall have much more Abundance; or as the unprofitable Servant shall have nothing, so the faithful Servant shall be greatly enriched; and all this our Lord speaketh to encourage our Diligence in his Service, and in improving all Gifts and Blessings we have received of him.

Quest. How can that be taken away from him which he had not?

1. Ans. To say he had no Talent, is not so; for his Lord gave him one Talent; neither can that which a man hath not, be taken away from him. How that can be said to be taken away what a man hath not.

2. Therefore our Lord doubtless meaneth it was all one as if he had it not, he hid it, he used or improved it not, or had gained nothing by it, and so it may be said he had it not, or did but seem to have what he had.

3. Besides temporal things are said not to be: *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for Riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away.* Whosoever have true Grace, have really some thing, i. e. they have that which hath Substance in it; but whatsoever is short of this, is in Christs account just nothing. Pro. 23. 5. Pro. 8. 21.

And cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, ver. 30.

Thus our Lord ends many Parables to discover the Certainty of the torments of Hell. Unprofitable Servant, &c.

Quest. Are not all unprofitable Servants?

Ans. All are unprofitable in the sense our Lord speaketh, when he says; *When you have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable Servants; that is, that we deserve nothing: God is not a debtor unto us, but whatsoever we have is of his grace alone; the meaning is, God receiveth no Benefit by our Service: Now if faithful Servants are unprofitable, how much more are wicked and slothful servants, they neither bring glory to God, nor profit to men, nor unto their own Souls?* Luk. 17. 10.

V S E.

1. How dismal will the End of all wicked men be? whether prophane persons or professors, who are Hypocrites, or slothful Servants.

2. Let the great End, Design and Scope of our blessed Lord in this Parable be well observed. 1. That tho he tarries long, yet he will come again. 2. That when he comes he will come as a King and Judge of Heaven and Earth. 3. That whatsoever Talents any have received, God expecteth the Improvement of them. 4. That some have more given to them, and talents that far excell what are given unto others, and that God distributes his own Goods and Favours as he pleaseth. 5. That all those that he gives true grace unto, do more or less improve their Lords money. 6. That whatsoever any men have, whether earthly or spiritual good things, they received all from Christ, and shall be called to give a strict account to him for them at the last day. 7. That proud and sinful men are subject to charge God and the blessed Jesus too lightly; nay, to censure him as being severe, and even lay the blame of their Miscarriages upon him, as if he had not given them enough, or that which was sufficient. 8. That all their mouths shall be stopped, and the Justice of God vindicated at the great day, and that their own plea shall silence them. 9. And that, tho the Rewards God will give are Rewards of Grace, yet all pious and laborious servants of Christ shall have glorious Rewards. 10. That there will be degrees of glory, one is made Ruler over ten Cities, another over two Cities. 11. That eternal wrath in Hell shall be the certain portion of all wicked men. Now to conclude with what I shall say to this Parable.

3. Let us all be exhorted to holy Diligence in our Lords Work and Service. (1) Consider the Weightiness of the Work, it concerns our eternal Happiness. (2) Consider, what hard Work the Son of God (considered as Gods Servant, or Mediator, hath done for us) and how he Sweat and Bled at his Work. (3) Consider, what Honour, Fear and Service, Love and Obedience Christ deserveth from us, and what a good Master he is; and God by our fruitfulness is said to be glorified. (4) Let us consider, whose eyes are continually upon us whilst we are at our work. (5) Consider, that now our Lord is very near, or 'twill be but a very little while before we must all appear before him to give up our account. (6) Remember, how kindly our Lord will embrace all his faithful Servants when he comes, and what a commendation he will give them, and what joys they shall enter into: And thus I close with this Parable. Joh. 15. 2.

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Errata in the Third Book.

PAG. 12. Lin. 60. Col. 1. for bruit read *brat*. P. 18. c. 1. l. 14. add *it*. P. 27. c. 1. l. 31. for *bag* r. *bug*. P. 27. c. 1. l. 62. for personage r. *person*. Pag. 48. col. 2. lin. 57. for hopes read *hofs*. Pag. 55. col. 1. lin. 49. for that r. *as*. Ibid. col. 2. lin. 32. for thom read *them*. Pag. 70. col. 1. lin. 41. for 29. read 16. Pag. 90. col. 1. lin. 32. for of read *at*. Pag. 35. col. 1. lin. 11. for cannot read *can*. Ibid. col. 2. lin. 37. for man read *none*. Pag. 88. col. 1. lin. 17. for any read *nothing*. Pag. 89 col. 1. lin. 41. for condemned read *contemned*. Pag. 93. col. 1 lin. 47. read *or is able*. Ibid. col. 2. lin. 39. for indewed, read *indowed*. Pag. 137. col. 1. lin. 42. add *they before cannot*. Pag. 141. col. 1. lin. 1. for thore read *there*. Pag. 147. col. 1. lin. 43. for *avail* read *not avail*. Pag. 170. col. 2. lin. 54. put a Comma at the End of *loft*. Pag. 147. col. 2. lin. 48. for *to die* read *death*. Pag. 151. col. 2. lin. 16. blot out *with*. Pag. 152. col. 1. lin. 63, read *are not all*. Pag. 153. col. 1. lin. 28, for *he* read *they*. Pag. 174. col. 2. lin. 33, for ntture read *nature*. P. 179, c. 1, l. 53, blot out *s*.

A SUPPLEMENT

To the BOOK Entitled,
Gospel-Mysteries Unveiled.

O R,

An Exposition of all the Parables, and some
Similitudes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ, contained in the Four Evangelists.

Wherein also

Many things are Doctrinally handled and improved, by way
of Application ; which compleats the whole Book.

The Parable of the Creditor that had Two Debtors.

S E R M O N I.

LUKE VII. 41.

*There was a certain Creditor which had
two Debtors, the one ought him five
hundred pence, and the other fifty,
Verse 41.*

*And when they had nothing to pay, he
frankly forgave them both. Tell me
therefore which loved him most,
Verse 42.*

*Simon answered, and said, I suppose
he to whom he forgave most. And
he said unto him, thou hast judged
truly, Verse 43.*

The Reason 36. One of the Pharisees desired him that
of our Lords he would eat with him, &c. and he went
speaking into the Pharisees House, and he sat down.
this Para- And behold a Woman in the City, that
ble. was a Sinner ; that is, a great Sinner, a
notorious Sinner, the chief Sinner in the
City, when she knew that Jesus sat at
Meat in the Pharisee's House, brought an

*Alabaster Box of Ointment, vers. 37. and
stood at his Feet behind him weeping, and
began to wash his Feet with Tears, &c.*

This offended the Pharisee, and he
said, *If this Man was a Prophet, he would
have known what manner of Woman this
is that toucheth him, for she is a Sinner ;
and then Jesus answered, and said, &c.*

2. As to the Scope of this Parable,
it is,

1. To shew, That Jesus Christ came
to save Sinners, great Sinners, such that
see the need they have of a Saviour : The
Pharisees were Sinners, tho' more close
and secret Sinners ; not Sinners in their
own Eyes, like others, but righteous
Persons. *The Scope
opened.*

2. To shew there are degrees of Sin,
or that some are greater Sinners, more
notorious in Sin and Wickedness than
others.

3. To shew both little and great Sins,
when the Sinner believes and repenteth,
there is Forgiveness and Pardon in God,
thro' Jesus Christ, for them.

4. That all Sin is forgiven freely of
meer Grace and Favour.

5. To shew, that great Sinners, when
forgiven, do love Christ more than o-
thers : And that the sense of Pardon of
Sin causeth a poor Sinner to love Jesus
Christ dearly.

But to proceed to speak to the parts hereof :

1. By the *Creditor*, the Great God is meant.

2. By the *Debtor* that owed him *five hundred Pence*, is meant *Mary Magdalen* and other great Sinners, that believe.

3. By the *Debtor* that owed him *fifty*, any Sinner that is not so notorious in Wickedness ; perhaps a Pharisee, or one who seems not so great a Sinner, tho' fee not how it may be particularly applied to *Simon*, for whether he believed in Christ or not, and was pardoned, is doubtful.

Having nothing to pay, or nothing to satisfy the Justice of God.

He *frankly forgave them*, that is, freely, without any Payment the Debtor made, or could make. Note,

Doct. 1. That Sin is a Debt, and Sinners are Debtors unto God.

See the Parable of a certain King that took an account of his Servants

Mat. 18.

Sin is called a Debt.

Tho. Delaun.

Why Sin is called a Debt.

1. That Sin is a Debt, and Sinners Debtors: This I shall but just touch upon here, because 'tis opened more fully elsewhere.

Sin is called a Debt, *ὑπερλήμματα*, *Debita*, (saith one) Sins and Debts are used promiscuously, as *Luke 11. 4.* compared with *Mat. 6. 10.* it is generally used in respect of any that are obnoxious to Punishment; the *Latins*, *Pauas debere*, so the *Hebrew* word *חַיִּב*, is used both for Debt and Guilt; 'tis not called a Debt as if it were owing to God, but the contrary, i. e. Obedience and Holiness: In Sin there is Guilt, or an Obligation to eternal Punishment; and this is called a Debt, &c.

Sin is called a Debt, *ὑπερλήμματα*, *Debita*, (saith one) Sins and Debts are used promiscuously, as *Luke 11. 4.* compared with *Mat. 6. 10.* it is generally used in respect of any that are obnoxious to Punishment; the *Latins*, *Pauas debere*, so the *Hebrew* word *חַיִּב*, is used both for Debt and Guilt; 'tis not called a Debt as if it were owing to God, but the contrary, i. e. Obedience and Holiness: In Sin there is Guilt, or an Obligation to eternal Punishment; and this is called a Debt, &c.

But for the farther opening of it, consider,

1. A Man may rob his Neighbour of his Goods, or of his good Name, and so be a Criminal and a Debtor: Sinners have robbed Almighty God of his Honour. *Adam* gave more Credit to the Devil than unto God, and so do all wicked Men.

2. Man brake God's holy Law, and so became a Debtor to his Justice, i. e. obnoxious to the Penalty denounced.

3. Debts may be more or less, tho' the least must be satisfied, for, so some Sinners are more guilty than others; here is one that owed *five hundred Pence*, and another *fifty*.

4. Debts may be so great, that a Debtor may not be able to pay them, nay, have nothing to pay; Sinners are such Debtors they are not able to pay, or sa-

tisfy God's Justice for their Sins, they have not one Farthing to pay.

5. If a Debtor falls into a Man's hand that is for strict Justice, unless he or his Surety pay all he owes, he must go to Prison: Now, God being just, infinitely just and holy, Justice being a Perfection of his Nature, unless Sinners or their blessed Surety pay all the whole Debt, or make a full and compleat Satisfaction to the Law and divine Justice, they must go to the Prison of eternal Darkness: *And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both, or freely forgave them.* See more on Mat. 18. 25, 26, &c.

Doct. 2. That Sin is *frankly or freely forgiven*, as an Act of sovereign Grace alone, to poor Sinners, thro' Jesus Christ.

'Tis forgiven freely to us, as an Act of God's Grace alone, but not without a full Satisfaction made by our blessed Surety, being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Pardon of Sin is an Act of God's free Grace. Rom. 3. 24.

Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins that are past, thro' the Forbearance of God, &c. Verf. 25.

God doth not forgive Sinners, as a simple Act of Mercy, without respect had to that Atonement, Redemption or Satisfaction made to his Justice by Jesus Christ, and this was signified in all those legal Sacrifices, and without shedding of Blood, was no Remission to shew, that without the shedding of Christ's Blood there is no Pardon, no Remission of one Sin, whether great or small Sins. Heb. 9. 22.

Obj. If we, in Christ, paid all our Debts, and that his Righteousness, i. e. his active and passive Obedience is imputed to us, how can we be said to be forgiven freely to this purpose Bellarmin?

1. Ans. We found not the Surety, but God. How Sin is forgiven, and yet Christ satisfied God's Justice.

2. Men may as well argue the Sureties Money was the Debtor's, because his Money pays the Debtor's Debts, and 'tis accepted for him; nay, and that the Bankrupt is as rich as his Surety.

3. Men, after the same manner also, may say they are their own Saviours, because saved by one substituted and accepted in their stead, to make an Atonement for their Sins, or to satisfy Justice, and save their Souls: And thus, instead of magnifying free Grace in Pardon and Justification, Men may utterly destroy it, and say they are justified by Works, because 'tis by Works of Obedience done by our Surety. But nothing is more fully laid down in the Word

Word of God than this, viz. That we are forgiven freely, pardoned and justified freely of God's rich Grace; it is all in a way of Mercy and Grace to us, but in a way of Merit and Desert to Jesus Christ; so that all the Glory does redound to the free Grace of God, and to Jesus Christ, the great Pay-master; and Thankfulness on our part, and that we are frankly or freely forgiven on our part, tho' our Debts are paid by Jesus Christ, I shall endeavour to make appear,

Pardon of
Sin cost
Christ dear.

I. In respect of the Spring and Rise of the way of our Pardon; the Satisfaction which was made for us, was contrived as an Act of infinite Wisdom, which is a greater Demonstration of Grace than if God had pardoned us as a simple Act of Mercy, without a Satisfaction to his Justice: What could be a greater Gift of free Grace, than to give his Son to die for us!

II. Because whatsoever Christ did for us, was in him also an Act of his Grace and Love; *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* but farther to prove it;

How it appears that our Pardon is of God's free Grace alone.

Rom. 9. 16.

Eph. 2. 8.

Man an Object of Mercy as well as of Love.

Ezek. 16. 5, 7, 8.

Tit. 3. 5.

III. Pray see how the Scripture declares it to be wholly of the free Grace of God that we are pardoned, justified, renewed and saved; *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that sheweth Mercy.* As Election is of Grace and Mercy alone, so is Justification, Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life also; *by Grace ye are saved thro' Faith, and that not of your selves; it is the Gift of God.* Grace may be extended to any Object, but Mercy refers to Persons in Misery; and God set his Love on his Elect, as fallen, and so as Objects of Mercy: Mercy, is Grace and Love to the Miserable, tho' Grace properly is Love not limited to this or that Person, in respect of their Circumstances, but only let out as sovereign Pleasure pleaseth; yet, I say, no elect Person proceeding from Adam to whom God manifesteth Love and Grace unto, but are Objects of Mercy also; because they, by Sin, were made miserable as well as others. The time when God set his Love on us, and Christ loved us, was when we lay in our Blood: And in that Condition, from Eternity, God beheld us; observe St. Paul's words, *Not by Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; according to his Mercy as well as Grace and Love, tho' we are pardoned, justified and saved according to the Works which Christ hath done; yet we must not call his Works and Obediences ours, not according to Works of Obedience or*

Righteousness that we have done. Moreover also the Elect are called *Vessels of Mercy*, as well as of Grace and Love,

IV. That Pardon of Sin, Justification, &c. is alone of God's free Grace, Love and Mercy, will farther appear, because there was no Force or Constraint put upon God, the Father, or the Son, to undertake our Redemption; I mean, God had been just and righteous if he had shewed fallen Man no Favour, no Love nor Pity; it rose not from any necessity of Nature that was in the Divine Being, but only from God's sovereign Will, Grace and Compassion.

V. It also appears in that the Gift of his own Son was an Act of his free Love to us; he was given to Die for us, to procure Pardon of our Sins, and the Justification of our Persons: What could be a higher Act of Love than this?

VI. We did not, could not oblige the Holy God, nor move his Heart towards us in a way of Grace, Love and Compassion: Did Adam intreat, pray or beseech God to pity or pardon him or any of his Off-spring, and send him (or them) a Saviour? No, no, *he ran from God*, and begged no Help nor Forgiveness of him, before free Grace was manifested unto him.

VII. Did any Sinner deserve Pardon of God? much less such a way of it that divine Wisdom found out: Was not all Men Rebels against God? it was free Grace, Sirs, without the least Desert or Merit; for we were so far from being deserving, that we were ill-deserving, nay, Hell-deserving Creatures.

VIII. Had Sinners any thing to pay which could satisfy the Justice of God? No, pray read the words of my Text, *And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Alas! they ran every day more and more in Debt, and had not so much as one Farthing to give, to satisfy for the Evil one Sin had in it; or had we any Friend or Brother, or could we find a Surety who would oblige himself to pay our Debts, was the Ransom of our Finding? No, no, (saith God) *I have found a Ransom.*

IX. Or did God do all that Good he designed to do, and hath done for us, with respect had to some after Recompence to be made by us, or Compensation for his great Love, Grace and Pity shewed to us? No, no, he knew it was impossible for Sinners to do that, nor did he expect it at our hands, no, not any thing, but a thankful Acceptance of his infinite Favour; *What givest thou to him, or what receiveth he at thy hands:* Job 35. 7. My Brethren, when we have done all we can do, *we are but unprofitable Servants,* Luk. 17. 10. and

and do no more than what was our duty to do. How then can we make him any recompence? besides are not the Blessings such that are infinite or unconceivable? i.e. God to be our God; what can Finite Creatures give in recompence of such a Gift? he (saith Paul) is not worshipped of mens hands, as if he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all men life and breath and all things. Do we, can we give any thing to God? Faith is the most noble Grace of all Graces, but Faith doth not give any thing to God; no, but 'tis always a fetching from him; we therefore bring nothing but empty Vessels to him that he may fill them; alas! all that we are and can do we owe to him, also Faith, Repentance, and all ability to do good, we derive from him as his own Free Gifts; we must therefore say with David, of thine own have we given thee.

1 Chro. 27.
15, 16.

Besides, God is full already, we can put no more into this Vessel; there is no empty space in God, nor in Jesus Christ; who can add to Infiniteness? or fill this Ocean fuller than it is? there is my Brethren no recompence to be made by us to God; no giving to him nor of his receiving at our hands; God hath no need of us, nor of any thing we can do, tho' he accepteth of our Services in and through Jesus Christ; therefore the All-sufficiency and Independency of God, shews it is of his Grace alone. Is not God happy, yea infinitely happy, perfectly happy in himself without us? and was he not as happy before he made the World, either Angels or Men as he is now? or can there be any addition made to his Infinite or Essential Glory.

No previous
Qualifications
required
of Sinners
that would
be Pardon-
ed but what
G.d gives.

X. Or are there any previous Qualifications to be in us, or any gracious act performed by us, in order to Pardon of Sin, as a cause thereof, or wherefore God doth forgive our Sins? *maybe you will say yea, there is Repentance, and Faith required in order to Pardon.*

Ans. Is not Man before Grace, or before he is Quickened, Dead, and are not all his Works Dead Works, and not accepted of God? Can a Tree bring forth good Fruit before it is made good; either that Repentance you speak of is good Fruit, or not (I mean Evangelical Repentance) or it is not; but such Repentance it cannot be before he receives the Holy Spirit; besides is not Faith and Repentance the Gifts of God, or doth legal Repentance, or any Evangelical act of the Creature procure Gods Grace and Special Favour? or must not God as an act of his own Free Grace Turn the Sinner before he can be turned? or because Repentance is required as a condition of Connexion; is it a procuring

condition by way of Casualty; or because God commands Sinners to make them new Hearts; hath the Sinner power of himself to do it? or, is not Pardon, Peace, Wine, and Milk, had without money and without price? if so, our Repentance, Faith, &c. procures it not at Gods hand.

Isa. 55.1,2.

XI. Doth not God act towards Man according to the Counsel of his own Will? and doth not Pardon, and all good we receive, alone flow from hence? *who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace that was given us in Christ before the world began.*

2 Tim. 1.9.

XII. Or is there any room left, after all that God has done, for Sinners to boast or glory? or doth the Will of God depend upon the Will of Man? or the Will of Man upon the Will of God? Is it not God (who by his Almighty Power) inclines the Will of Man to move and bow to the Will of God? Or shall any have cause to admire themselves in the Day of Judgment, in respect to the care they have had of their own Souls, and for their improving the means of Grace? or shall they not admire Gods Free Grace and Infinite Love to them? or doth not God do more for them that are Saved than he doth for those who perish? *Who makes thee to differ from another? or what hast thou which thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it? why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* What I have said I hope will fully tend to satisfy all, that Pardon of Sin, Justification, and Eternal Life, is alone of Gods Free Grace.

1 Cor. 4.7.

Application.

1. Let great Sinners from hence see what ground there is for them to throw themselves upon Christ for Pardon, *This Woman was the City Sinner, she was a great Sinner; but with Paul she obtained Mercy: Gods Thoughts are not as our Thoughts; poor Sinners are ready to think were not their Sins so great God would Pardon them; but be not discouraged, tho' your Sins are great, yet Christ's Merits, and Gods Mercy thro' him, are far greater, we have a great High Priest, therefore say with David, Forgive my Sins for they are great; he knew God was great in Mercy, he that Owed Five Hundred Pence, nay Ten Thousand Talents was Pardoned, as well as he that owed but Fifty or a Hundred Pence, though your Sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; it is as easy with God to Pardon great Sins as small, Christ having Atoned for all the Sins of Gods Elect.*

Heb. 4.14.
Psal. 25.11.

Isa. 1.18,19

2. This

2. This reproves those who magnify the Power of Man, or the Will of Man, intimating, that after all that God or Christ doth, in order to Conversion and Pardon, he leaves the whole Issue to the Will of the Creature; so that it is the Will of Man that determines the Matter, whether the Word shall be effectual or not: God (they say) doth afford equal Power, Grace, Mercy and Love to them that are damned, as he doth to them that are saved: If so, then we must read that Text backward, 'Tis of him that willet, and of him that runneth, and not of God that sheweth Mercy.

1. If Men, before Grace is infused into them, or they are renewed, can act as they say, what is become of that Enmity that St. Paul says is in the Carnal Mind? he says the Will or the Mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be; and these Men say it may be subject, without any Super-natural or Almighty Power is put forth to change the Heart, or else they say nothing, but must give up their bad Cause.

Hear what one of them says; 'And that no immediate Operation of the Spirit upon the Mind or Will, is needful for any one that believes, &c. This he strives to prove.

2. They affirm, that Moral Swasions are sufficient to bring Men to believe; so that the Power Men have to believe, is naturally in them, and not given to them immediately by the Lord.

And hereby they deny also, that Man is dead in Sin, Spiritually dead, and cannot act Spiritually, nor do any thing that is truly good, until he is quickned.

3. Also then we are born again of our own Will, or of the Will of Man, and not as it is the Effect of the Will and good Pleasure of God, contrary to the Testimony of the Spirit, that says, which were born again, not of Blood, nor of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.

4. Moreover, (as one notes) it follows according to their Opinion, that the general Love which they would have in God to all Mankind alike, is but an indifferent Respect to all; which proves Love or Hatred, as the Sinners Will determines it; but when they ascribe any particular Love to God, it is no other than what rises from the Sinners Love to him, viz. he foresaw what we would do, and how we would repent and embrace Jesus Christ, and be holy, and therefore he chose us.

3. Since Pardon is of meer Grace, let God have all the Glory; he will not give it to another.

4. Poor Sinners plead God's absolute Promises, and tho' you can find nothing but Sin in your selves, yet cry to God,

and cry to Christ, to take the Cure of you into his own hand, that you may feel his wonderful Operations in the day of his Power: 'Tis good to lye at the Pool, and wait for the movings of the Water, and cry, that the Holy Ghost would put you into that Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness.

5. You that are pardoned, see you ascribe all to God's free Grace; O give all the Glory unto him, whose Grace I shall the next time shew is wonderful; 'tis God who, thro' Christ, frankly forgave you, and also gives all things else you need, with Jesus Christ also; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be Glory, Wisdom, Power and everlasting Praises. Amen.

S E R M O N II.

LUKE VII. 48.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

Doct. 1. I Have spoke to one Point of Doctrine from hence, viz. That Sin is frankly or freely forgiven, as an Act of sovereign Grace.

I shall now proceed to another, viz.

Doct. 2. That the free Grace, Mercy and Goodness of God, thro' Christ Jesus, is great and wonderful.

1. I shall shew the Rise or Spring of Grace.

2. Prove and fully evince the Truth of this Proposition.

3. Shew that this Grace is let out in a way of Righteousness.

4. Apply it.

By the way, you know that the word *Grace* is variously taken in Scripture; but here by it I mean the Favour, Goodness and rich Bounty of God.

1. As to the Rise and Spring of Grace, it is alone from the glorious and transcendent Nature of God: God in himself is good, nay, Goodness it self in the Abstract. As he is Love, Holiness, &c. so he is Goodness, that is, one of the infinite Perfections and Attributes of his Holy Nature; and so God is the Fountain

tain from whence all Grace and Divine Favour flows to any of his Creatures.

2. The Rise and Spring of Grace is from the *Divine Will*; it flows alone from the Fountain of Goodness, and as the Result of God's eternal Counsel and Purpose, according to his own good Pleasure, wheresoever Grace is let forth, it is as the Apostle shews, according to the Purpose of him *who worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will*: As it is let out in *Wisdom*, and also freely and abundantly; so it is according to his own sovereign Pleasure, *who hath saved us and called us, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, &c.* It hath an amazing Rise from God himself, without any Motive, or any thing foreseen in the Creature to excite him; *he is gracious, because he will be gracious*: No other Reason can be given of Divine Favour.

2. To prove and fully evince, that the Grace, Mercy and Goodness of God is wonderful.

1. This appears, because where *Sin* abounded, *Grace* hath much more abounded, or super-abounded: Grace did not prevent the entring of Sin, yet God had a glorious Design and Purpose in permitting of Sin to enter; *by one Man Sin entered into the World*: Tho' Sin that entered was very evil, the worst of Evils, the Poison and Venom of all Evil, yet Grace exceeds, far exceeds, exceeds beyond all Measure the Evil of Sin, yet Sin had Mankind down, and reigned, nay, triumphed over them: *Adam's Sin* set Sin upon the Throne, and no Man nor Angel could pull down or destroy this Tyrant; for *Sin reigned unto Death*, all Men lay slain and dead at the Feet of Sin, and it hath (in all it Reigns) the chiefest Seat in their Souls; they are led, influenced and brought into Subjection to it; it predominates, and has a ruling Power in Men, and they naturally yield themselves Servants and Vassals unto it: Nay, and every Faculty of their Souls are corrupted thereby, the Nature of the Reign of Sin is therefore dreadful, and is attended with horrid Guilt, Filth and Pollution, causing the Sinner to hate God, and filling his Mind with Enmity against him, making Man a Slave of the Devil, and obnoxious to the Curse of the Law, the Wrath of God, and everlasting Torments and Condemnation in Hell; there is an amazing and frightful Evil in Sin; and the entring of the Law made it appear more evil, yea, exceeding sinful.

But yet the Grace of God much more aboundeth or super-aboundeth, in that Sin, (tho' it hath so much Evil in it, nay, may objectively be said to have infinite Evil in it) yet 'tis but the Product of the

Devil: The Fruit or Spawn of a degenerate Spirit; but Grace is the Product or Fruit of the Mighty God; and therefore as the Cause (in its Nature) far exceeds the Effect, so does Grace, Goodness and Divine Power far exceed the Evil of Sin: What is a degenerate and finite Spirit to the holy and infinite God: Tho' Sin is very evil in its kind, yet Grace is far more good and powerful in its kind, in respect of the Cause and Fountain from whence it proceedeth.

2. If we consider the Subjects whom Sin defiles, and in whom it reigns, and thro' whose Consent it came to be: Grace exceeds Sin; Sin is of the Will of Evil Man; but Grace is the Product of the Will of God: What is a poor, weak, impotent Creature? What is Man? Sin is brought forth or produced by the Consent of the Will of Man, in yielding to Satan's Temptations.

But Grace is the Product of the Will of God, the Fruit of a holy and gracious God; therefore, if Grace be let forth freely, it must exceed and super-abound all Sin, as God exceeds the Power of the Devil, and an infinite Creator a poor finite Creature.

3. Because Grace manifested to a poor weak Creature, can limit, restrain, curb, nay, kill and overcome Sin when it is in its highest Power, or hath its greatest Strength and Dominion in the Soul of a Sinner, as appeared in this Woman, in whom Sin had (perhaps) as strong a Power as ever in any one Soul; yet the Love and Grace of God laid Sin and Satan sprawling (as I may say) at her Feet; she is made to trample upon them both, by the Vertue of a small Beam of Divine Grace shining in upon her Soul, thro' Jesus Christ,

4. Grace must needs far exceed Sin in its Power, to the rooting out and vanquishing of it, because God purposed in his eternal Counsel to permit Sin to enter into the World, and to suffer it to abound, that he might thereby take an occasion to manifest the Nature and infinite Power of Grace, in pardoning, subduing and utterly destroying Sin, (and him whose Work it is. To be sure the holy God would never have suffered this Monster to have been born, and to have entered into the World, had it not been to magnify his own Glory, and especially the Glory of his rich and infinite Grace: who would suffer such a Traytor to get out of Prison, (if he could keep him there) whom he knew would be too hard for a whole Kingdom to overcome, when once let loose?

5. Grace must needs far exceed Sin, or super-abound, because God added the Law upon Mount Sinai on purpose that Sin might abound, moreover the Law entered

Rom. 5. 20.
Grace far
exceeds Sin,
or is much
more abun-
dant.

Rom. 5.

Sin very e-
vil.

Rom. 5. 20.
Vers. 7. 13.

In what re-
spect's Grace
may be said
to exceed
Sin

Grace helps
a poor Crea-
ture to pre-
vail against
Sin.

God's De-
sign in per-
mitting Sin
to come into
the World,
was to ad-
vance his
own Grace.

The Law
entered to
make Grace
abound.

entered well, wherefore, that Sin might
 Rom. 5. 20. *abound, but where Sin abounded Grace did*
much more abound. This was the grand
 Reason, viz. That God might display
 his infinite Grace in destroying it. What
 Warrior would suffer his Enemy to arm
 himself with new Weapons, and give
 him time to get fresh Strength, if he did
 not know, after all, he could with much
 ease lay him sprawling at his Foot? *The*
Strength of Sin is the Law, but thanks be
to God, thro' Jesus Christ, which giveth
us the Victory. Grace, thro' Christ, gi-
 veth us the Victory when Sin is in the
 fullest Strength. Sin hereby seemed to
 revive and get new Arms, or renew its
 Power in wounding and ruining Man-
 kind, (by reason of the Weakness that
 is in them, to perform the righteous
 Precepts thereof:) And this, I say,
 God on purpose, caused to come to
 pass, that he might reveal the Glory and
 Power of his Almighty Grace, Divine
 Love and Goodness to his Elect, in par-
 doning of Sin, and vanquishing of it.

The Law
enters on
the Consci-
ence in Con-
victions,
that Grace
may abound.

6. Nay, God lets the Law break in
 upon the Conscience of a Sinner, that
 Sin may abound in the Soul by the Con-
 victions of the Spirit, when first he be-
 gins to awaken him, so that the Sinner
 is amazed to see what horrid Guilt and
 Filth is in his Heart, and what a holy
 God he has offended, and what Wrath
 he lies obnoxious unto thereby; and yet
 all this is but to discover his infinite and
 inconceivable Grace in his free pardon-
 ing of all Sin, in the sight and sense of a
 poor Sinner, in whom the Law thus en-
 tered, and Sin revived; I say, the Com-
 mandment came and Sin revives, that
 Grace might be magnified.

7. That the Grace of God is wonder-
 ful, and doth much more abound than
 Sin, appeareth in that Sin came into the
 World by Man: *By one Man Sin entered*
 Rom. 5. 12. *into the World, and Death by Sin;* but
 Grace, as it enters by the eternal and
 infinite God, so it is by the Grace of all
 the three Persons in the blessed Trinity.
 Now, shall the Evil of the Sin of one
 Man exceed the Grace of all the Persons
 in the Godhead? or shall there be more
 Evil done to us by the Sin of one impo-
 tent Man, than the Grace of the infinite
 God, i. e. the Father, Son and Holy
 Spirit, can out-vye or deliver us from,
 who believe in Jesus Christ?

8. That Grace does super-abound Sin,
 appears in respect had to that Gift of
 God, in sending of his only begotten
 Son to save us from the Guilt, Power
 and Punishment thereof: No doubt God
 suffered Man to fall; that his Grace and
 inconceivable Love might be revealed
 this way. O! what a Gift of God's
 free Grace is Jesus Christ, which way
 could God manifest greater Love and

The Gift of
Christ tends
to make
Grace a-
bund.

Favour, than to give his Son, or not to
 spare his own Son, but to deliver him up to
 die the cursed Death of the Cross for all
 his Elect. Grace (we may be sure) will
 withhold nothing from us, that hath not
 withheld the Son of God from being a
 Sacrifice for our Sins, and so to procure
 our Pardon. O this is glorious Grace,
 Grace enough to astonish Men and An-
 gels.

9. Grace appears yet farther to be
 wonderful, because none of the other
 Attributes of God, but this of Divine
 Love and Goodness, could help and save
 undone Sinners: Could Wisdom, Holi-
 ness or Power do it? No: For as Wis-
 dom had never contrived the way, had
 not Grace and Favour stirred it up, so
 had not rich Grace broke forth in the
 Gift of the Son of God, Justice would
 soon have put a stop to all the other At-
 tributes, (had it been possible for them
 to have stirred without being moved by
 the Divine Will, or God's Grace, Fa-
 vour, rich Bounty and Goodness.) More-
 over, 'tis God's Grace that is the Spring
 and Rise from whence all the Divine At-
 tributes (in our Lord Jesus Christ) are
 magnified, shine in Glory, and meet in
 sweet Harmony; therefore Divine
 Grace thro' Christ is wonderful.

Grace mag-
nifies the
Glory of God
in all his
Attributes.

10. How wonderful must that
 Grace be that lay hid in God from all
 Eternity: and O what a way hath Di-
 vine Wisdom found out; to let it
 forth to poor Creatures, and which
 could not indeed be manifested without
 various ways of revealing the Divine
 Will, in different Times, different Me-
 thods and different Dispensations of this
 Grace, as before the Law, under the
 Law and under the Gospel; and hence
 'tis called *the manifold Wisdom of God.* Eph. 3. 10.
 Moreover, 'tis the Grace and Favour of
 God to Mankind, which the holy An-
 gels desire to look into, and which they
 are amazed to behold: They saw or
 beheld God in our Nature, the second
 Person of the Trinity, who assumed our
 Nature into Union with his Divine Per-
 son, and this with the greatest Astonish-
 ment; but chiefly, no doubt, as it is the
 Effects of glorious Grace, *he was seen of*
 Angels: we preach the Gospel; we
 make known the infinite Love and Grace
 of God in Christ; *which things the An-*
 gels desire to look into, or pry into, that
 is, with Admiration.

1 Tim. 3.
16.

11. 'Tis wonderful Grace, because it
 far exceeds all that Favour, Grace and
 rich Bounty which God bestowed upon
 Adam in Innocency: It's true, he was a
 Son of God, but it was but by Creation,
 but by Grace and peculiar Favour we
 are the Sons of God by Adoption and
 Regeneration, and so are Heirs of God,
 Heirs of all things, and can never be dis-
 possessed.

Grace by
Christ a-
bounds the
Favour
shewed to
the first A-
dam.

possessed of the Inheritance. Adam had the Image of God stamp'd on him, but was liable to loose it, and did loose it, but Grace in Christ restores that Image again, so as never to be lost: He had a glorious Earthly Paradise, but lost it; but Grace in Christ raises us up to possess the heavenly Paradise, which we cannot loose.

Greater Favour shewed to the Saints than to the holy Angels in some respects.

12. 'Tis greater Favour, Grace and Goodness, (as it seems to me) than what the holy Angels possess or partake of: They are the Sons of God, but not the Spouse of Christ; they have not that Honour, but are only Servants that wait upon the sacred Bridegroom and his Bride: He that is the eternal God, is truly Man: Grace unites the Son of God and the Nature of Man in one Person. This Grace and Favour manifests Believers, who are united to him above Angelick Nature; *Verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.*

Heb. 2. 16.

The whole of our Salvation is of Grace.

13. The whole Oeconomy of Man's Redemption, and all the Transactions of the Almighty, from the beginning of the World, in and by Jesus Christ, as to the Design and Purpose of it, was to magnify God's glorious Grace, if we speak of those Covenant-Transactions between the Father and the Son, about our Salvation before the World began; or God substituting, and accepting, and sending his Son into the World, or of his Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession and Glorification; it is all to manifest the Glory of God's rich Grace; or if we speak of Election, Reconciliation, Union, Justification, Vocation, Pardon of Sin, Adoption, final Perseverance and our Glorification; 'tis all but to shew the rich Bounty and Grace of God to his Chosen.

14. If we consider to whom (or to what undeserving and ill-deserving Creatures) this Grace is manifested, it must needs appear wonderful to all, what they were. I have already shewed. O what an ill and vile Creature was Man, and from what an Estate to what an Estate doth this Grace raises all that receive Christ.

15. The beginning and ending or finishing God's Temple-work, is all to glorify rich Grace; so that *when the top Stone is laid, it shall be with Shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it, 'Zeccha.*

4. 7.

16. Mercy, Grace and Divine Goodness is infinite, immense and unsearchable, for as God is infinite in Power, Justice, Wisdom, Holiness, &c. so he is also in Grace and Divine Goodness; therefore where Sin abounded, Grace much more abounded, for in Christ the Streams of

boundless Grace and Mercy are opened; and therefore Grace let out in Christ is wonderful.

17. If the Knowledge we have of this Grace in this World be so wonderful, or so much of it as is let out here, what will that Grace be which we shall have opened to us in Heaven? for what is Glory but the consummating, completing or perfecting the Design and Purpose of God's eternal Favour and rich Grace to Believers.

18. *Lastly*, Grace is wonderful, because it reigns; Grace hath erected a Throne, and is upon that Throne, and there reigns; and that Grace might reign, it stirr'd up Divine Wisdom, to find out the way of its Advancement on the Throne; which was to remove all those Obstacles which hindered Grace's Accession thereunto, and mounting thereon; which was Divine Justice, the Law, Sin and the Devil, but by Christ's Obedience Justice is satisfied, the Law magnified and answered, and Sin and the Devil dethroned; so that *as Sin reigned unto Death, Grace might reign thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Grace, my Brethren, like a glorious and victorious Queen, is by Jesus Christ raised to the Throne, and is Crowned, it reigns and prevails against all Opposition whatsoever: As he that reigns must first overcome all that attempt to have supream Sovereignty or the Preheminancy, or those that were got on the Throne; so hath God's Grace prevailed against Sin and Satan, who before reigned and tyrannized over us. Our Lord *hath spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it;* that is, by the Blood of his Cross, *and hath condemned Sin in the Flesh;* and now Grace reigns, and shall reign unto eternal Life.

Rom. 5. 21.

Col. 2. 15.

Rom. 8. 3.

Thirdly, I shall shew, that Grace is manifested, and comes to reign, thro' Righteousness, or in a way of Righteousness: See the Text just mentioned, *That Grace might reign thro' Righteousness, by Jesus Christ.* Grace is not elevated, it hath not its Accession to the Throne in an unjust or in unrighteous way, but it reigns thro' Righteousness; not thro' our Righteousness, no, but thro' the Righteousness of God, in his fulfilling his faithful Promises to his Son, but chiefly (as I conceive) thro' the Righteousness of Christ, or thro' his perfect and compleat Obedience, or that Righteousness he wrought out, by doing and suffering: It was thro' the Righteousness by Jesus Christ that Grace reigns; for without this Righteousness, neither Holiness, Justice nor the holy Law would let Grace reign; but O how hath Divine

How Grace reigns thro' Righteousness by Christ Jesus.

Rom. 5. 21.

vine Wisdom contrived a way, in compliance with the divine Will, that Grace might reign thro' Righteousness by Jesus Christ! Divine Justice was upon the Throne before, judging and condemning guilty Sinners, and Grace could not reign; but Wisdom hath so provided Matters now, that Grace is upon the Throne, and all the divine Attributes are mounted with rich Grace, being magnified, and shining forth with equal Glory; but 'tis all to advance sovereign Grace and infinite Goodness.

2. Grace reigns thro' Righteousness by Christ also, in the Application of what he hath done and suffered for us; his Merits are applied and his Righteousness is imputed to every one that believeth in him, as an Act of sovereign Grace; and hereby also it appears, Grace reigns in subduing a Man's self, sinful self, righteous self, and all the Powers of Darkness in the Soul, and in quickening, acquitting, justifying and pardoning, &c. all Sinners, yea, the greatest Sinners that believe in Jesus.

3. In persevering in the Profession of Righteousness, and in a State of Life unto the end, God's rich Grace by Christ is such, that *he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, until he hath brought forth Judgment unto Victory.*

4. Grace reigns and will reign thro' Righteousness, by conquering and subduing Sin, or all those remainders of Corruptions in the Hearts of his pardon'd Ones. Moreover, let our Condition or Temptations be what they will, *Grace is sufficient for us*; which is upon the Throne, and shall reign unto eternal Life, and at last will Crown with Glory all who are under the ruling and reigning Power thereof.

5. Grace reigns, and will reign thro' Righteousness by Jesus Christ, in subduing and final vanquishing the last Enemy, which is Death: Jesus Christ, by whom, and in whom Grace reigns, hath overcome Death, *and now hath the Keys of Hell and Death*; he hath Power over Death and the State of the Dead; *I will deliver them from Death*; O Death, *I will be thy Plague*, O Grave, *I will be thy Destruction*: So long as Christ reigns as Mediator, so long Grace will reign in and by him, *and he must reign until he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*; *the last Enemy that shall be destroyed, is Death.*

Application.

1. Wonder not now, that this Woman that owed five hundred Pence was forgiven, and he that owed ten thousand Talents was forgiven, since divine Grace

in and by Christ Jesus, is so wonderful, and is let out in an amazing manner, or since Grace and divine Goodness is infinite, the Ocean and great Deeps of unspeakable Love and Mercy are broken up, and overflow all Banks and Bounds: Nothing can stand as a Bar in the way of Grace, no Sin, no unworthiness; for the more Sin, the greater Sinner, and the more unworthy a Sinner is, the more is free Grace raised, magnified and exalted in and by Jesus Christ.

2. How may this silence all the Objections any Sinner can make against himself? *My Sins are great*: Are they greater than Grace by Jesus Christ can pardon? *where Sin abounds (remember)* *Grace has much more abounded.* *Rom. 5.19, 20.*

3. Is Grace exalted? does Grace reign? is Grace upon the Throne? O blessed News to a rebellious World, and to all vile Traytors and ungodly Sinners: O hast to this Throne; 'tis one thing to have a gracious King or Queen to reign, and another thing to have a gracious Saviour to reign, and Grace it self; infinite Grace, boundless Grace, immense Grace, unspeakable Grace, inconceivable Grace, and unsearchable Grace to reign. O how happy are we under this Reign! let all cry, Long live this Sovereign, this Queen, *i.e.* Grace, that reigns thro' Righteousness by Jesus Christ, this is the best Reign that ever was; no sovereign Prince or Princess ever reigned thro' such Righteousness: This is a just Reign, Grace reigns and exalts infinite Justice, infinite Righteousness by Jesus Christ; 'tis a God-honouring Reign, a Christ-exalting Reign, a Law-magnifying Reign; 'tis a Sin-condemning, a Sin-killing, a Sin-destroying Reign; 'tis a Hell-confounding and a Devil-terrifying, a Devil-amazing and a Devil-consuming Reign; 'tis a Death-vanquishing, a Death-plaguing and a Death-destroying Reign; 'tis a Sinner-inlightning, a Sinner-quickning, a Sinner-renewing, a Sinner-acquitting, a Sinner-justifying, a Sinner-pardoning, a Sinner-comforting, a Sinner-enriching, a Sinner-exalting, a Sinner-sanctifying and a Sinner-glorifying Reign, &c.

4. O happy Souls! in whom, and over whom, and for whom Grace reigns, almighty Grace, infinite Grace and unspeakable Grace: What, O Child of God, dost thou fear? who can pull Grace off the Throne? can Men? can Devils? No, they can as soon pull God out of Heaven, or Christ out of Heaven, as dethrone God's sovereign Grace, as we may infer and perceive by what hath been said.

5. We may infer what vile Wretches they are who despise the Reign of Grace or condemn God's sovereign Grace, magnified

nified in bringing Christ to the Throne, and being now exalted in and by him on the Throne: Wo to such that ever they were born! who had rather let Sin reign, their Lusts reign, the Devil reign, Unbelief reign, free Will reign, than that Grace, free Grace, sovereign Grace, almighty Grace should reign, thro' Righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to eternal Life.

T R Y A L.

Doth Grace reign in and over you? Examine your selves: Are you united to Christ, for that way Grace comes to reign in us? Do you truly believe in Christ for Righteousness? Are you quickned, renewed, regenerated; for so are they in whom Grace reigns? Are you dead to Sin, dead to the Law, dead to your own Righteousness, dead to this World? Then Grace reigns in and over you; if the Life of Sin is not let out, or if Sin reigns in you, and you obey it in the Lusts thereof, Grace reigns not in nor over you.

6. O come in, Sinners, before Grace comes off the Throne, and divine Justice ascends the Throne, to condemn such who have abused sovereign Grace; we know not how soon that may be.

7. Rejoyce, ye Saints, and triumph in rich Grace; Satan is under your Feet, and subdued by divine Grace; the World is overcome, and Sin shall not have
Rom. 5. 14. *Dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law, but under Grace, that is, the Reign, Power and Influences of Grace.*

S E R M O N III.

LUKE VII. 42, 43, 47, 48.

Tell me therefore which of them loved him most, Verf. 42.

And Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most; and he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged, Verf. 43.

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her Sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little, Verf. 47.

He said unto her, Thy Sins are forgiven, Verf. 48.

IT appears from hence, that Jesus Christ is the most high God, for he

forgave her all her Sins; but none can forgive Sins, as they are against God, but God himself only. But to proceed, there is one Proposition more I shall speak to, viz.

Doct. 3. That all those whose Sins are forgiven, do love the Lord Jesus Christ; and such to whom much is forgiven, or who have been great Sinners, they exceed others in Love to him.

1. I shall speak a little as to great Sins, and shew you who are great Sinners.

2. Shew what Pardon of Sin is.

3. Shew why such who are forgiven, do love Jesus Christ; and why great Sinners, when pardoned, exceed others in their Love to him.

4. Shew that Pardon of Sin is a great Gospel-Blessing.

5. Apply it; and so conclude with this Parable.

1. All open Profaneness, or all gross immoral Acts of Wickedness, are great Sins, as Murther, Treason, Sodomy, Buggery, Adultery, Blasphemy, Swearing, Drunkenness, Theft, Backbiting, Railing, Lying, Cheating, Oppression, Extortion, &c. these are great Sins, and such who are guilty of any of these Sins, are great Sinners, and are to be punished by the Judge. Who they are that are great Sinners.

2. Such who deny the Being of God, or the blessed Deity, are great Sinners, or that with there was no God; 'tis thought by worthy Men, that all Atheists ought to die. Atheists are vile Sinners.

3. Such that deny Christ to be the most high God, are great Sinners; and sad it is to see and hear what multitudes of them are in and about this City, I say, such are Sinners of the first Rank that deny the Deity of Jesus Christ. For, Such that deny the Godhead of Christ are notorious Sinners.

(1.) They justify the unbelieving Jews in their cursed Evil, in charging our blessed Saviour with Blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God, that is, the Son of God by an eternal Generation, or of the same Essence with the Father, for so they understood him when he said God was his Father; and Jesus answered them, *Many good Works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those Works do ye Stone me: The Jews answered him, saying, For good Works we Stone thee not, but for Blasphemy, and because thou, being a Man, makest thyself God.* Now, if the Lord Jesus was no more than a meer Man, or not the true, living and eternal God, he was a Blasphemer, and they that deny his Godhead are guilty of the same Blasphemy Joh. 10. 32, 33. Joh. 5. 18.

my the Jews were guilty of, and do, (I say) justify them in their horrid Wickedness, and so render the ever blessed Jesus to be a grand Impostor; and therefore are great Sinners, or Sinners of the first Magnitude; which also farther appears,

(2.) Such who deny the Deity of Christ, provided they worship him, or give the same divine Honour and Adoration to him which is due to the Father, or to God only, they are Idolaters, because they worship a meer Creature, and give the Glory of God to another; nay, and if they trust in him for Soul Help and Salvation, they are cursed: *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm, &c.*

(3.) Moreover, according to their Notion and cursed Heresy, Jesus Christ cannot be our Saviour, for none is our Saviour but God alone; *I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me. I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.* Let such Men, who deny Christ to be the most high God, never call Jesus Christ their Saviour any more. O what great Sinners are these! let them pretend never so much to Sanctity and Holiness, yet they are Sinners of the first Rank.

A Person that has received much Light, and yet live in Sin, is a great Sinner.

4. Such Men that have received much Light, and have been under great Convictions of Sin, and of the Evil which is in Sin, yet live in, continue in Sin, and in a hellish Course of Life, their Sins are great Sins, and they abominable Sinners.

So are such who violate all their sacred Vows.

5. Such who after most solemn Vows and Promises unto God, (when they have been laid on a sick Bed, or have been in danger of Death) how they would return to him, and leave their evil and ungodly Lives, yet sin, and as bad and as vile, or viler than ever: These are great Sinners.

Such who sin, who have been often reproved, are great Sinners.

6. Such who have been often reproved, and yet harden their Necks, are great Sinners, and near to Destruction, or being suddenly destroyed, and that without Remedy.

7. Such that plead for Sin, or extenuate their Sin, nay, boast and glory in Sin, or in their Shame, or make a Mock of Sin, and are Ring leaders to Sin, enticing others to Sin against God; these are great Sinners, who do not only destroy their own Souls, but the Souls of others also.

Such that abuse the Patience of God are great Sinners.

8. Such who abuse the Mercy, Patience and long Suffering of God, or turn the Grace of God into Wantonness, are great Sinners.

9. Such who pretend to be Teachers of others, reprove others, and yet are guilty of the same Crimes; what a Minister and a Swearer, a Drunkard, a

Whoremonger! O what abominable Sinners are such!

10. Hypocrites, such that appear to be godly, and yet secretly, are wicked: These are also Sinners of the first Rank.

11. Persecutors, and such that reproach the People of God, and would take away their Lives; those are great Sinners.

12. All Unbelievers, or such who refuse or reject Jesus Christ and the Offers of Grace, are great Sinners.

13. All that sin presumptuously are great Sinners, tho' they know the thing they do is abominable to God and destructive to their own Souls, yet will do it.

14. Lastly, All Backsliders in Heart, who wickedly depart from God, are great Sinners. Now, *Mary Magdalen* was a great Sinner; some say she was guilty of seven abominable Sins; whether that was so or not, we can't tell; but let it be so: Suppose a Man was guilty of all those cursed Sins I have mentioned, and Christ should pardon him, certainly you would conclude he must needs love him with a wonderful Love. Our Lord saith her Sins were many, and yet were forgiven; and therefore she loved much, or our blessed Saviour with a great Love, and more than some others.

Secondly, *What is it to have Sin pardoned? or what is the Forgiveness of Sin.*

First, *Negatively.*

1. Pardon of Sin doth not free a poor Sinner from the Being of Sin in his Soul; no, there is, after a Man is forgiven, much Corruption still remaining in the best of God's Children; which makes them cry out, as *Paul* did, *When I would do good, Sin is present with me.*

2. Pardon of Sin frees no Child of God from being corrected or chastened by the Lord, for Sins that he may afterwards be overtaken with: No, as many as *I love, I rebuke and chasten, &c.*

3. Pardon of Sin doth not take away the Desert of Sin, it doth not argue, because Sin is forgiven, that therefore, those Sins do not deserve eternal Punishment, but it discovers that Christ hath born the Demerit of all legal Punishment of all the Sins of a Person that is pardoned.

4. Pardon of Sin doth not denote, that every Person forgiven, sees, or hath the Sight and Sense of Pardon, or feels the Comfort of it in his own Conscience: No, a Man may be forgiven his Sins in the Court of Heaven, that can't find that Pardon in the Court of his own Conscience;

Hypocrites great Sinners.

Persecutors great Sinners.

Unbelievers and all presumptuous Persons are great Sinners.

Backsliders in Heart are great Sinners.

What Pardon of Sin is not.

Rom. 7.

Rev. 3. 19.

ence ; for as some truly believe, and know it not, so they may be forgiven all their Sins, and know it not.

Secondly, Affirmatively.

What Pardon of Sin is.

Pardon of Sin is an Act of God's great and infinite Grace, whereby he, for the sake of Christ, or thro' the Redemption of his Blood, removes the Guilt of all Sin from the poor Sinner.

1. God discharges him from the severe Sentence of Death denounced by the Law ; the Law can no more condemn a pardoned Person.

2. He is discharged whom God pardons, out of the Hand of divine Justice, the Satisfaction of Jesus Christ being applied to him.

3. A pardoned Person is freed from all vindictive Wrath here, and from that which is to come ; so that no Guilt can come upon him to Condemnation for ever.

Psa. 41. 4. 4. Pardon of Sin heals the Soul, it cures every Disease of the inward Man ; such have all their Sins blotted out, as a Debt that stands in a Book is crossed, so Pardon puts Sin far away ; 'tis called a Covering of our Transgressions ; God will not see Sin.

5. Pardon is a Non-Imputation of Sin to the Sinner, it being imputed to Christ, and by him all the whole Debt is paid ; and in Pardon, a Discharge is given to the poor Sinner.

6. Pardon is the receiving of a penitent and believing Sinner into God's special Love and Favour, and that for ever there is an Accomplishment of the Warfare between God and that Person, to an endless Eternity.

Secondly, Why do pardoned Sinners (especially great Sinners) love Jesus Christ dearly ?

The Cause why pardoned Sinners do love Jesus Christ.

1 Joh. 4. 19.

Ans. Because, when they are pardoned, they thereby come to taste of the Nature of Christ's choice Love ; and it is indeed impossible for any to have a sweet and saving Relish of the Love of Jesus Christ, and not love him ; *We love him because he first loved us* : Christ's Love is the Fountain Love, our Love is the Stream ; his Love is the Inducement and the effective Cause of ours to him : He that first loves, loves freely ; the other therefore loves under Obligation. Sinners are bound or obliged to love Jesus Christ, and such who have most forgiven, are obliged to love most : To forgive one Pound to a poor Man that had not one Farthing to pay, must create Love in him to his Creditor ; but he to whom five hundred Pounds is forgiven, and was in danger every moment to be Arrested and laid in Prison, must

needs cause greater Love in him to such a merciful Creditor.

II. Because a pardoned Sinner sees, or is convinced of the Freeness of the Love of Christ, and how undeserving he was of such Love and Pardon. O, saith the Sinner, I was an Enemy to my dear Lord Jesus, and also a vile and loathsome Creature, and yet did he love me and pardon me : Omachless Love and Mercy ! I, but, saith a great Sinner, a City Sinner, I was more undeserving, I was the chiefest of Sinners, a Ring-leader to all Iniquity : Here is a poor Creature forgiven, but, alas, I led him into many Acts of Wickedness, and yet my dear Lord hath freely pardoned me, as he hath this and that Person, who never sinned as I have done.

I was (saith Paul) a Blasphemer, a Persecutor and Injurious, but I obtained Mercy ; and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding great with Faith and Love : I consented to the Death of Stephen, that holy Disciple of Christ. Brethren, suppose an arch Traytor, one who raised up War against his gracious Sovereign, and prevailed by Craft and Malice to draw thousands into the same Rebellion, should be freely pardoned by his offended Prince, would not he see cause to love his Sovereign dearly, yea, more than any of the rest ? O, saith he, I had no Ground to expect to be forgiven of all my Companions, but rather to be made an Example of ; but lo I am pardoned, and also received into his Love and Favour. *Tim. 1. 13, 14.*

III. Because when a Sinner is pardoned, he comes to know that he was one of those Objects which Christ set his Heart upon, and chose from everlasting. O ! I see I was beloved before time, that I am called and pardoned in time. *O what is Man, that thou shouldest magnify him, that thou shouldest set thy Heart upon him !* What, Christ set his Heart upon such a Creature ! what, on me ! saith a great Sinner ; what, the great God pardon me, because he loved me, and Jesus Christ set his Heart on me, and love me, and die for me, to pay my Debts, or satisfy divine Justice for my Sins, and espouse me ! O this raiseth, nay, even ravisheth the poor believing and repenting Sinner ! Should a poor Damsel in Rags, a meer Vagabond, a Beggar, be told, that a King is fallen in Love with her, and sends to her a most endearing Letter, and rich Token of his Love, worth Millions : O, she stands astonished ! Nay, says the Messenger, 'tis so, and lo here is also a rich Wedding-Robe sent you, and all Princesses Ornaments, Jewels and Pearls, to adorn you. Now, she can't but believe it, and she breaks out into Tears for Joy, and readily yields ;

yields; but cannot forbear, when she comes into his Presence, to get behind him, and washes his Feet with Tears, (as poor *Mary* did to her dear Prince, Sovereign and Saviour:) I was that Vagabond, that vile Beggar, saith she, and I see Christ loves me, and hath given to me a rich Token of his Love, viz. the Pardon of all my Sins; and he hath put upon me the glorious Robe of his own Righteousness, and adorned me with the Graces of his Spirit. Now, how can such a *Mary*, such a Sinner, forbear, but must love Jesus Christ dearly! A free Pardon is worth millions of millions of Gold, nay, more than ten thousand Worlds, and what is the Robe of Christ's righteousness then worth, and the Ornaments of his own precious Graces.

For Christ to set his Heart upon a Sinner, denotes an Act of his Love and Affection, also a high Value and Esteem he hath for such Persons.

IV. Because Pardon of Sin the Soul fees cost Christ dear, even his own Hearts Blood, O his Love, *Mary* now could say, is wonderful, I cannot comprehend it, I see Love in his Purposes, Love in his leaving his Throne above, and coming into this World, Love in his assuming our Nature, Love in his Covenant, and in his Promises, Love in his dying Groans and bleeding Wounds, Love in his Face and Countenance, and in his Invitations and kind Embraces: O my Heart is sick of Love; I was the Person he loved, *He loved me, and died for me; — loved me, and has washed me from my Sins in his own Blood.*

Rev. I. 5.

V. The Glory of Christ appears to all them that he pardons, but especially to great Sinners, *the Glory of his Person, and the Glory of his Love*; and this melts the Soul down, and makes it little, nay, nothing in its own Eyes. O wretched I! how have I carried it to this God, to this Christ! am I beloved thus by him! and do I love him no more! love him no better! who have pierced him, wounded him, grieved him! I loath my self; nay, *abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* Wo is me, (saith the Prophet *Isaiah*) *I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts,* his Glory who hath set his Love upon me! what an admirable Beauty and Glory is in this Prince! in this Person! and doth he vouchsafe his Favours to me, pardon me, love me, so loathsome a Creature.

Job 42. 5.

What strange Effects had the Knowledge of *David's* Love on *Abigail's* Heart, when she heard of his Intention to take her to Wife.

1 Sam. 25.

41.

Let me be a Servant to wash the Feet of the Servants of my Lord.

The Knowledge of Christ's Love in

Pardon, &c. kindles a vehement Love in the Souls of such unto him; 'tis discovered too, especially if great Sinners, *Love begetteth Love*, when 'tis known and manifested to the Person 'tis set upon. O what strange Passions of Love have been kindled in some Virgins, when they have heard of the Love of such or such a renowned Person to them, from whom they deserved no such Favour: Sirs, the Love of Christ is of an attracting Nature, of a drawing Nature in its Manifestations.

VI. *Divine Love is shed abroad in the Heart* (of a Sinner) *by the Holy Ghost*; Rom. 5. 5. divine Love is a Grace of the Spirit; 'tis not the bare Effects of natural Affections, but of the holy Spirit, and of Christ's Affections expressed to a poor undone Sinner, they are constrained by his Love, whose Love being deep and unsearchable, the more we know of it, the more and more we love him: *The Love of Christ passeth Knowledge*: Eph. 3. 19. The deeper the Mine of Gold is, the deeper the Miner must dig for it, and more pure Gold he finds. Now, these great Sinners, above others, comprehend the Love of Christ, tho' it can never be fully comprehended by Men nor Angels.

VII. Pardoned Sinners, especially great Sinners, dearly love Jesus Christ, by reason of the Effects and Fruits of his Love.

1. Pardon of Sin is not only the Effects and Fruits of Christ's Love to Sinners, but of Life also; Christ loves us, and therefore he hath quickened and raised us from the Dead, as he raised *Lazarus* from the Dead, because he loved him.

The Effects of Christ's Love.

2. Faith, Repentance and a new Heart, a broken and contrite Heart, are the Effects of Christ's Love.

3. Union with him is another Effect of it also; because he loves us, he espouses us: A Sinner is not only pardoned, but espoused; Christ Marries all he forgiveth, and so they are thereby freed from all Dangers of being Arrested for former and after Debts contracted; the Husband answer alls.

4. Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification, Communion, and free Access to the Throne of Grace, are the Effects of Christ's Death, of his Obedience, Intercession, but primerly of his endearing Affection to poor Sinners.

5. Peace of Conscience and Joy in the Holy Ghost, are the Effects of Christ's Love, and of Pardon of Sin.

6. *Lastly*, Final Perseverance, everlasting Life, a Crown of Glory, the full Fruition of God, and of being for ever with Christ, where he is, are Effects of his Love. Now, these things being so, it must needs follow, that such who are

pardoned must needs love Jesus Christ; yet such that were great Sinners love him most; their Love exceeds the Love of all others, considering how black and miserable they were once above others, and now are made happy for ever.

Thirdly, From what hath been said, it appears, that Pardon of Sin is a great Blessing; yet, to open this a little farther, together with the Nature and Way of Forgiveness;

Pardon of
Sins a won-
derful Bless-
ing.
Pla. 32. 1.

I. Consider, that such who are forgiven, or whose Sins are pardoned, are pronounced blessed: *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered*; nay, no Man is blessed indeed, whose Sins are not pardoned. Luther saith free Justification and Remission of Sin makes a Divine, and another of great worth also saith, it is this that makes a Man a Christian; and such that understand not this Doctrine, all other Knowledge is to little purpose.

Jeremiah
Burroughs.

II. Consider the original Spring of it, and that is God's wonderful Love, (which I have opened) 'tis the Fruits of infinite Love, and Product of the excellent and unconceivable Mercy and divine Goodness of God; *To the Lord our God, belongs Mercies and Forgiveness*, wherein doth the Riches of Mercy, the abounding of Mercy, the multitude of Mercies, more appear than in Pardon of Sin, and in the way of it, in the Sea, the Ocean of Mercy, all the Sins of the Elect are swallowed up: the Mercy of God (as one notes) makes no difference between little and great Sins. O consider the original and efficient Cause of Forgiveness! i. e. the Love and rich Mercy of God.

The merito-
rious Cause
of Pardon,
is Christ's
Death.

III. Consider also the meritorious Cause of Pardon of Sin, or that which procured it, or opened the Door and Flood-gate of Mercy and free Forgiveness unto us; for altho' it be free to us, yet it cost Jesus Christ dear; 'tis not had but through the Mediation of the Lord Jesus: Many think not of the way of Pardon; Christ must stand up and plead for Pardon, and do also whatsoever he obliged himself to perform in that Covenant that was between him and the Father, if ever we are forgiven our Transgressions.

Our Sins, you have heard, were a Debt, a great Debt, they obliged us, bound us over to eternal Wrath, and this Debt must be paid; God is just, and we had nothing to pay. Now, the Lord Jesus took this Debt upon himself, he became our Surety, he entered into Bonds to pay every Penny which Sinners owed, *he made him sin for us that knew no Sin*; our Sins were transferred on Christ, they were charged upon him, and he must not only plead for our Pardon, but must

2Cor. 5. 21.

bleed also; he must suffer and die for us, he bore that Wrath and Punishment that was due to us for our Sins, that we, thro' his Blood, might receive free Remission. O what a Blessing must Pardon be that is thus procured; we have no Remission but thro' the Blood of Jesus Christ.

IV. Consider the final Cause of Forgiveness of Sin, which is the Glory of God, not only the Glory of his Grace, Love and Mercy, but the Glory of his Justice, Holiness, Truth, Power and Faithfulness: *Sirs, Justice, Mercy, &c. equally shine forth in Glory in our Pardon, thro' the Satisfaction made for our Sins by the Lord Jesus: God appears not only gracious, but just and holy also: Sin is punished, the Sanction of the Law is vindicated, and Justice is satisfied in Christ, or in the way of Remission of our Sins, being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins, &c. That God might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: We have not Pardon of Sin in a way of Mercy only, but in a way of Justice, and Righteousness also.*

The final
Cause of
Pardon, is
the Glory of
God.

Rom. 3. 24.

Veri. 25.

Veri. 25.

Now, what a Blessing is that which tends to advance and to magnify the Glory of God in all his glorious Attributes! God is glorified as well as we are pardoned thro' Jesus Christ.

V. Every Person that is forgiven their Sins, are also justified, and stand righteous before God: Thus do not guilty Criminals among Men, tho' forgiven, yet they are not pronounced clear, or justified and acquitted of the Guilt of their horrid Crimes and Treasons that were charged on them: No, they are lookt upon as vile and wicked Wretches still; but a Believer pardoned, is also justified from all things, and stands without Spot in God's sight, in the Righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ: *Thou art all fair, my Love, and there is no Spot in thee.* Pardon of Sin is never without Justification; the one is in a way of Mercy, or as an Act of Mercy, and the other an Act of Justice: Some would have Justification only to consist in Pardon of Sin, but that certainly is a great Mistake, and an Error; tho' we grant, that actual Pardon and actual Justification of a Person always go together, and therefore Forgiveness, I say, is a great Blessing.

All pardon-
ed Persons
are justified.

Acts 13. 39.

Cant. 4. 7.

VI. Consider, that when God forgives a Sinner, he forgives not only one or two Sins, but all Sins; and not only all Sins past and present, but all the Sins that ever he shall commit afterwards, in respect to vindictive Justice; therefore well

When God
forgives Sin,
he forgives
past, present
and to come,
all Sins

well might the Prophet say, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgressions of the Remnant of his Heritage!* I know some deny that Sin is forgiven before a Person repents, &c. but Sin, as it lays the Soul obnoxious to divine Wrath, may be forgiven so; and yet not forgiven in some other sense: A Father may correct his Child, and so doth God his Children, as a tender Father; but as God is considered an offended Judge or Governor, all their Sins are forgiven at once, as soon as they are united to Christ, and have his Righteousness imputed to them; for else they do not stand always justified, or are not in a justified State, and so not free from Condemnation; *but there is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus:* Besides, do not we sin daily. *There would be* (as one observes) *no Instant of time, wherein a Believer would not be in a State of Condemnation,* were not all Sins to come, of justified Persons, forgiven, as well as those past, therefore there is no necessity of a renewed Act of Faith, when we sin, in order to our Justification, nor Pardon of Sin, or as to vindictive Justice; (for he that is once justified so, and pardoned, is forever justified and pardoned, and cannot be brought into a State of Wrath and Condemnation) tho' there be need of a renewed Act of Faith, as to our own Consciences and Peace, when we have sinned; for a Believer, may by sudden Death, be taken away before he has put forth an Act of Faith, for the Pardon of his last Sin; but tho' he be, he is happy for ever, being ever in a State of Life and Peace; But if a Saint should die before he hath repented, and put forth such an Act of Faith, which some speak of, he must perish for ever; but this cannot be; the Union he hath with Christ cannot be dissolved: and *whom God justifies, them he also glorifies:* Therefore Pardon of Sin is a great Blessing.

VII. Pardon of Sin is a great Blessing, because such have Peace with God; *Go in Peace, thy Sins are forgiven thee:* Tho' a weak Believer, because he sees not his Pardon, may want Peace, yet he is in a State of Peace, and the Ground of all Fears and Doubts are gone for ever: *We have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father:* There remains no more Fury in God to Believers, or to pardoned Persons. No Sin can break the Covenant of Peace, or make God to become our Enemy, and cast us off: Our Consciences may be troubled when God is pleased, and Sin be pardoned in the Court of Heaven, tho' a poor Believer cannot see the Par-

don in the Court of his own Conscience. Therefore Pardon of Sin is a great Gospel Blessing.

VIII. Pardon of Sin makes all Mercies sweet, and to be Mercies indeed; what Mercy can be sweet to him who lies under God's Wrath, and is not forgiven his Sins? What Comfort can such take in Riches, Honours, Lands, Wife, Children or Friends, when such Guilt lies upon him, and he stands charged at God's Barr, and condemned by God's Law.

IX. Pardon of Sin heals all the Wounds of the Soul, and gives ease to a poor Believer; *Heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee,* that is, give me the Sight and Sense of free Forgiveness; let me know I am pardoned: Remission of Sin takes away the Sting of Death.

X. Forgiveness of Sin also makes all our Afflictions easy to be born: With what Comfort may such, in times of greatest Tryals and Dangers, lift up their Heads? so that those Afflictions that sink others down, and are hard to be born, a Believer can triumph over, and is more than a Conqueror, says, *Her Warfare is accomplished, for her Iniquity is pardoned.* If the Sweet of Pardon makes the bitterest Affliction easy, it is a great Blessing; but this is so; therefore 'tis a great and unconceivable Blessing.

XI. Pardon of Sin takes away the Fear of Death; such need not be afraid to die, nor to come to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ: 'Tis only the Guilt of Sin that in both those Respects, terrifies the Sinner.

XII. Such that are forgiven their Sins, are delivered from Wrath to come, and shall have eternal Life; therefore Pardon of Sin is a great Blessing.

XIII. When Sin is forgiven, it is forgiven for ever, and shall be remembered no more: All our Sins are cast into the bottom of the Sea; they are blotted out, they are cast behind God's Back, they are put as far away as the East is from the West, the North is from the South. O what Expressions are these! and all to let us know, that Sin is forgiven for ever. Pardoning-Mercy is the sure Mercy of David; Pardoning-Mercy is an irrevocable Blessing. God will never revoke his Act of free Forgiveness.

XIV. Pardoning-Mercy is only given to a few; he hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy; 'tis denied to the fallen Angels, and only given to them for whom Christ died, with an Intention and Purpose to save, and it being a special and peculiar Blessing; it is a rich and a great Blessing: What, are there but a few in all the World who have their Sins pardoned! and am I one of them,

them, and I one of the worst of all Men! O what peculiar Love, distinguishing Grace and Favour is this!

Infer.

1. What blessed News is here for great Sinners, the worst of Sinners, even for City Sinners? Is there a *Mary Magdalen* here? I mean, any as vile as she was: O let such cast an Eye upon Jesus Christ, look to him, throw their Souls down at his Feet, with Self-Abhorrence, believingly; and they need not fear but Christ will pardon them.

Exhort.

2. O admire pardoning Grace! how free, and how full it is! *Sirs*, you that are once pardoned, are for ever pardoned, as to vindictive Wrath and Justice; your Iniquities God will remember no more, they are thrown into the Depths of the Sea, and shall never rise again to your Condemnation in this, nor in the World to come.

Examin.

3. Try your selves you that are Professors; do you love Christ? have you been great Sinners? Certainly you are not pardoned, if you do not love the Lord Jesus with most endeared Love and Affection.

It will be a hard thing for such to sa-

tisfy themselves, that much is forgiven them, if they do not find their Hearts burn in Love to God and Jesus Christ.

Christ hath the chiefest Room in the Hearts of pardoned Sinners; *He that dwells in Love, dwells in God*; their Hearts, Thoughts and Desires are set upon, and remain with, and run out after Jesus Christ; if you love him, he is continually in your Minds, more than Husband, Wife, Children, Silver, Gold, or any thing in this World: *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? neither is there any on Earth that I desire besides thee*: Such will often visit him, and labour to be like unto him, and do or suffer any thing (called to) that they may honour, and shew forth the Praises and Glory of Jesus Christ; be sure *Mary* did what she could: And Sin, every Sin and Lust is hateful to them, because it is so to him; they also love all that Christ loves, or are born of God.

Lastly, Let Christ's Love to you satisfy you always, comfort and console your Souls; *for who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?*

The Parable of the Strong Man Armed.

S E R M O N IV.

M A T T. XII. 29.

Else how can one enter into a strong Man's House, and spoil his Goods, except he first bind the strong Man? and then he will spoil his House.

Thus *Matthew*: *Mark* also hath the same Parable.

No Man can enter into a strong Man's House, and spoil his Goods, except he will first bind the strong Man, and then he will spoil his House.
Mark 3. 27. See *Luke* also:

When a strong Man armed keepeth his Palace, his Goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his Spoils. *Luke* 11. 21, 22.

THE Evangelist *Luke* seems to speak more fully and distinctly to this Parable, than either *Matthew* or *Mark*, tho' all agree in Substance, and speak the same things; and so also, as to the Occasion or Reason of it.

Which we shall first briefly open; and in order to this, consider, That the Pharisees charged our blessed Lord with casting out Devils by the Prince of Devils, after he had dispossessed one with a Devil who was both Blind and Dum, who immediately both Saw and Spake.

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This Fellow doth not cast out Devils but by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils.

And Jesus knew their Thoughts, and said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to Desolation; and every City or House divided against it self, cannot stand.

And if Satan cast out Satan, how then shall his Kingdom stand?

But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you.

And then he adds, *Or else how can one, &c.*

So that, (1.) The occasion of these Words, or the Scope of the Parable, was

was to convince them that he by the power of God did cast out Devils, or by the power of his glorious Deity.

2. To discover and detest their most horrid Blasphemy in saying he cast out Devils by *Belzebub*, &c. which he first doth by the parable of a *Kingdom divided against it self*, which I purpose to speak to afterwards: The Devils are not divided, they agree and unite in upholding their Kingdom, and did they oppose one another, or not agree among themselves, their Kingdom (our Lord shews) would fall or come to desolation; like as a Kingdom, City, or House if it is divided would do; but farther to convince them that what he did in casting out Devils, was done by the Spirit of God, &c. he brings in this Parable also, and that thereby he might manifest their detestable evil, and make it appear that he was the true *Messiah*, and God over all, blessed for ever more, for who but the mighty God hath power over the Prince of the power of the Air, or the God of this World; he therefore that can subdue Satan, bind Satan, and throw him out of his Palace, must be one stronger than he, which none is, but God only, for the Devil will never yield up his strong hold as long as he is able to hold it; there is no way to dispossess him but by force or power; will any Man consent, or willingly yield up to his Enemy his Palace, his Goods, his Power, Kingdom and all he hath? No certainly, if he could prevent it, he would do it, and so would Satan also; and this is the chief thing our Saviour discovers and makes appear by both these Parables.

Secondly, we will consider the parts hereof.

The parts of the Parable opened. Else how can one enter into a strong Mans House, Luke calls it a Palace; by the House or Palace here is meant a poor Sinner, not his Soul only, but his Body also; but chiefly his Soul. A strong Mans House, &c. Satan is this strong Man, and sometimes he possesseth both the Body and Soul of a Sinner; tho' the Body is not under his power, but by the special permission of God, nor doth he so universally possess the Bodies of Sinners as he doth their Souls, by his power, craft-devices, temptations, suggestions, and Diabolical influences; who ruleth, or worketh in the Children of disobedience, that is, in them all universally.

One enter, that is any one that is opposite to him, one that is his Enemy, with a design and purpose to dispossess him, bind him, and throw him out of his strong hold, and take possession of his Palace or Habitation: The meaning of our Saviour is, how

tan I enter by my Spirit and Power into the House or Palace of the Devil, viz. into the Heart of a Sinner, if I do not first destroy, or spoil Satan of all that power he hath in such a poor Creature, or bind and throw him out, or I must subdue Satan, if I either dispossess him of the Body or Soul of a Sinner.

When a strong Man Armed keepeth his Palace, Satan is Armed, and he must be disarmed before he can be overcome.

Wherein he Trusteth, the Devil Trusteth in his Armor, but when Christ who is a stronger than he comes, he takes from him all his Armor, and makes him know his Armor is not sufficient to defend him from the Almighty Power of the Son of God: From whence we may Note one or two propositions.

1. That the Heart of a Sinner is the House or Palace of the Devil.

The Doctrine raised

2. That the Devil is a strong and formidable Enemy, dreadful and terrible, and yet,

3. Must be subdued, and his Power destroyed in a Sinner that is converted, which none can do, but the Lord Jesus Christ only, who is stronger than he.

I shall speak briefly to both of these.

(1.) The Body sometimes, and the Soul always, of an unconverted Sinner, is the Palace and Habitation of Satan; but before I proceed, let me lay down one or two explanatory Propositions, by way of premise.

(1.) The Devil hath no just or lawful right to this House, viz. neither to dwell in the Body, nor the Soul of any Sinner, no, but 'tis wholly by Fraud and Usurpation he got in and rules there.

2. The Devil could not by Force take possession of the Sinners Heart, but he gets in by craft and subtilty; this way our first Parents gave him originally the possession of the Hearts of all Men.

Secondly, to prove that the Heart of a Sinner is the House or Palace of Satan.

(1.) Our Lord calls it the Strong Man's House, true God only hath the Just right to every Man and Woman in the World, all Souls are mine saith the Lord.

The Heart of a Sinner is Satans Palace.

But God left Man at first to keep this House, I mean his Soul, for him, that is for his own praise and glory, and gave such strength to Man that he might have kept possession, his Faculties being true, strong, and uncorrupted at first; they were like so many valiant Soldiers that Satan could not by open force Conquer; the will being able to resist the whole Infernal Lake of

How he got possession of the Sinners Heart.

Hellish Fiends; but by subtilty the Enemy prevailed, and the Will consented; as Paul shews, *the Serpent beguiled Eve thro' his Subtilty*: And the Will complying, all the faculties or powers of the Soul were overcome, and so the Devil entered, and made it his Palace or chief dwelling place.

How Satans Palace is fortified.

2. A Palace of a Prince is commonly well Fortified, when 'tis in the midst of Enemies; so Satan hath fortified his Palace with a high Wall on one side, called *Presumption*, which seems to be as high as Heaven, and on the other side with a *deep Ditch*, called *Despair*, lest Grace should assault him; and by this means he secures his Palace, and dwells there for a long time in peace, and tho' the word of God seems to batter the high Wall, yet, it's common operations can make no great breach in it on that side, nor fill up the Ditch on the other; and let me tell you, the Devil hath not stronger fortifications than these two.

What are Satans attendance.

3. A Palace is the place of a Princes chief Residence, and where he keeps his Court, and hath his attendance; so Satan's chief residence is in the Heart of an unregenerate Sinner, and there he keeps his Court, and hath all the depraved faculties of the Soul, and *lusts of the Eyes, the lusts of the Flesh, and pride of Life* to attend upon him, and who readily submit to his commands, or cursed suggestions, he goeth to and fro in the Earth, and walketh up and down in it, and is the Prince of the power of the Air, but there he finds no rest, no, the Heart of an ungodly Sinner is his dwelling place, that is his Palace, where he lodgeth and delights to be.

Job 1. 7. Eph. 2. 5.

He goes from one place to another, not as an idle *Peripatetick*, or one that has nothing to do, no, but a spy to see what House is empty, that so he may get in and dwell there; for the Devil has many Palaces, yea Thousands of Thousands, so that he is no small or petty King; in his walks also he curiously observes, and pries into every Persons Temper, and into all Families, Nations, and Churches, to see what advantages he can get over them, and set them together by the Ears, for he strives to do all the mischief he can to Kingdoms, Churches, Families, and particular Persons.

4. A Prince can go in and out of his Palace at his pleasure, so Satan sometimes, as an unclean and filthy Devil, a black and debauched Devil, goes out of his House or Palace, or out of a Man, as our Lord shews, and lets it be swept and garnished, but if it be empty, i. e. if Christ dwells not there, he says, *I will return to my House from*

whence I came; nay, and he brings other Spirits with him also, tho' not debauched Devils, yet worse evil Spirits, and there afresh he takes up his habitation and dwells, tho' the Man perhaps thinks he has a better Prince dwelling with him.

5. A Palace of a Prince commonly is Painted, Adorned, and made a place of delight suiting his Spirit; so the Heart of every Sinner, the Devil makes fit and pleasant to him, suiting to his odious and unclean Spirit, nature and temper, nay, and some Sinners Hearts are *Garnished*, and richly Painted with Moral virtue, and seeming holiness, which pleaseth Satan very well, as a *white Devil*, when he can cause them to rest in, or trust to meer acts of Morality and external holiness; he can transform himself from a swearing Devil, a blaspheming Devil, into a religious Devil, a praying Devil; for such a painted Palace were the Hearts of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, which were swept and garnished (as in the next place in speaking to another Parable) I shall shew.

6. In a House or palace of a Prince are many lodging Rooms both for repose and security, so in the Sinners Heart the Devil hath several Rooms to repose himself in, and are also as places of security to him against danger; which are the *corrupt faculties of the Soul*, as the *rebellious and obstinate Will, depraved Judgment, the misled Conscience, a deceitful and trayterous Memory, and the carnal and earthly Affections*; for by this means he takes as it were his quiet repose, and remains safe.

What are Satans lodging-Rooms in the Sinners Heart.

7. A House or Palace hath many Doors, by which the Prince that dwells therein can enter; so the Devil he hath many Doors by which he enters into the Heart of a Sinner, which are the *Five Senses*; at the Eyes he gets into the Hearts of unchast Persons, and also into the Hearts of the Covetous: *Achan saw a goodly Babylonish Garment, and a Wedge of Gold, he saw it with his Eyes, and then Satan entered, his Heart, he coveted them, and at this Door also he entered into the Heart of Judas*: He gets in also at the Ears of others, they are charmed with bewitching Musick, perhaps at a Play-house, or a Whorehouse, and there the Devil enters; the Adulteress was taught by Satan to perfume her Bed with Myrrh, Aloes and Cinamon; the Devil knows how to get in at their Nostrils by bewitching Smells, as well as at the Ears by Flesh-pleasing Melodies, moreover he enters into Thousands at the Door of *Tasting and Feeling*; how are Sinners ensnared by delicious Wines, Meats, and other Liquors, and abominable delights and pleasures of the

Joshua 7. 2.

Pro. 7. 17.

Jer. 5. 8. the Flesh, every one like pampered Horses Neighing after their Neighbours Wives.

Thirdly, I shall shew you what kind of House or Palace this strong Man's is.

What kind of Palace Satans Palace is.

Mat. 23. 27.

1. It is a most odious and filthy House, prepared and made fit for unclean and filthy Spirits to delight in; the Heart of a wicked Man is alike abominable with the Devil in the sight of God, being full of Snakes, Vipers, filthy Vermine, Mire and Dirt, for unto such things the filth of Sin, and unclean Spirits are compared: Our Saviour likeneth the Hearts of the Pharisees to filthy Sepulchres, painted without, but within full of Dead-Mens Bones, and all uncleannesse.

2. 'Tis a House prepared and furnished by the Devil, fitted for him to dwell and delight in, and it is also fortified against God and Jesus Christ, with all the hellish art, subtilty, and strength the Devil hath; that all attacks of the Word of God, Ministers, godly Persons, and motions of the good Spirit might be ineffectual; the Devil helps all the powers of the Soul (they being under his influences) to resist all good Counsel, reproofs and perswasions, of yielding up their Palace to the Lord Jesus Christ; moreover wicked Men are true drudges to their hellish Master, and are always in Arms, and fight against God, and blaspheming his Name, and all that dwell in Heaven.

3. 'Tis a House built upon the brink of Hell, and stands in the Regions of Darkness, and the Devil that dwells therein, who pleases those wretched and misled Mortals for a time, according to the varieties of their carnal appetites, designs to Murder and destroy them every one, and make them as miserable as himself, and will in a short time if they meet not with the mighty Jesus, to enter in, and destroy the strong Man Armed; their House will be set on Fire, and burn to the lowest Hell, for the materials with which it is built are fit matter for eternal Flames.

Application.

1. We infer from hence that Sinners are wofully Blind, and misled, and that their state is most deplorable.

2y. Also we from hence infer, that it is no wonder that the word of God hath no more effect upon the Hearts of Sinners, as they are under the power of the Prince of darkness, the strong Man Armed keeps the House, he hath power over, and reigns in the Hearts of the Children of disobedience, their Hearts are fortified against the Lord Jesus Christ,

and Almighty power must be exerted to subdue Satan, if ever the Gospel becomes efficacious to one Sinner; but to proceed,

2. *Doct. the Devil is a strong and formidable Enemy, dreadful and terrible, and yet must be subdued, and his power be destroyed in a Sinner that is converted, which none can do but Jesus Christ only, who is stronger than he.*

I shall inspeaking to this,

1. *Shew what renders the Devil so formidable an Enemy.*

2. *Shew why he must be subdued in a Sinner that is converted.*

3. *Shew why none but Jesus Christ can subdue Satan.*

I. Satan is a dreadful Enemy in respect had to his great strength, called the strong Man, and upon the same account he is called a Lyon, a strong and fierce Creature; should all the Men in the whole World combine together to fall upon one single Devil, they would be but as so many little Babs in the hands of a mighty Gyant, I mean in respect of their own strength.

II. He is a formidable Enemy, considering how at one blow he overcame Man before he was depraved, or lost that power with which he was created, and also when Satan was but a few Days old; and in subduing innocent Adam, a Man clothed with mighty strength; he by that one stroke Conquered all the World, all the whole Race of Man-kind fell down Dead at his Feet, O what an Enemy is this! If Man when he was so strong and well armed, was subdued by him; what can Sinners do now, who are become weak and feeble, and also naked, to withstand his force and mighty power?

III. The Devil is a dreadful Adversary, considering what a multitude of evil Angels he hath in his Army, they are a mighty Host, and all clothed with great power, tho' perhaps some of them have greater strength than others, yet all are strong and powerful, they are all Angels, tho' fallen Angels, and tho' they have lost their purity, yet they have not lost their strength: Bless the Lord, ye his Angels that excel in strength.

Two things discover their strength, (1.) their Superiority, (2.) their Spirituality.

1. Angels are the Top of the Creation; Man was made a little lower than the Angels. Now in the works of Creation, the Superiour (as one Notes) hath a power over the Inferiour, the Beast over the Grasse and Herbs, and Man over the Beasts, and Angels over Man.

The Devil is a formidable Enemy.

Satan at one stroke overthrew the whole World.

Satan hath a mighty Host of Infernal Spirits with him.

Psal. 103. 20.

*Satan being
a Spirit
hath the
advantage
of us.*

2. The Spirituality of their nature, adds to their power. Man hath a glorious Soul, but he is Flesh as well as Spirit, and his Soul is darkened, weakened and weighed down by a lump of Flesh. It is forced to row with a strength suitable to its weak partner, and sometimes to War against himself, I mean his Flesh; also his fleshly part clouds his understanding; but now Angels are all Spirit, and have no such mixture of matter to incumber them.

*The Devils
agree and
are united.*

IV. Their Unity renders the Devils dreadful Enemies, our Saviour shews us here that they cement together, and are not divided; order and oneness makes their number formidable, tho' we cannot say there is Love amongst the Devils, yet there is unity, they all agree together in carrying on their design against God, Christ, and the Souls of Men. Who ever heard of any discord, jarrings or wranglings amongst the Devils? This may shame the Saints. Shall Devils agree to ruin us, and shall not we agree to oppose and counter-work them?

*The Devil
hath worsted
valiant
Captains of
Christ's Army.*

V. The falls of so many brave Champions by Satans assaults, renders him a dreadful Enemy; what mighty Men of God hath he worsted, who were strong in Grace, or well Armed: Remember Righteous Noah, Just Lot, Meek Moses, and David a Man after God's own Heart, and Wise Solomon, and Patient Job, and Valiant Peter: What can naked and unskilful Sinners do, if such expert Warriors were worsted and fell by him?

*The Devils
bold and
courageous.*

VI. His courage or fierceness, and undauntedness, renders him a formidable Enemy; what Saint of God was Satan ever afraid to assault? Nay, oftentimes whole Churches, and spoiled them too, tearing them to pieces, nay his courage & undauntedness appears in his attacking and assaulting the Son of God himself, as also his power in taking him up, and setting him upon a Pinnacle of the Temple; what a bold Devil is this, and what a sight was there? to see the Son of God, carried in the Arms of the Devil, whom he knew was the Son of God; nay, and tho' he was worsted, yet came again upon our Lord, the Prince of this World cometh, &c.

*Satan an
implacable
Enemy.*

VII. His implacable malice, hatred and envy to God and Sinners, renders Satan a very formidable Adversary, he is filled full of enmity, and is unreconcilable, he will never yield nor submit himself to his Enemies; some Men who have received a little of his Spirit and Nature, have been very malicious, and hardly reconcilable, but the Devil is all malice, even made up of hatred and envy; who can stand before Envy saith So-

lomon? if not before an envious Man, who can stand before an envious and a malicious Devil, who is wholly set upon doing of mischief?

VIII. Bloodiness and horrid cruelty, Satan shews that Satan is a dreadful Enemy; bloody Enemy. Many Tyrants have been very cruel, but how bloody minded and cruel then is the Devil? all the cruelty that any Tyrant and bloody Persecutor ever exercised, he was stirred up to do it by the Devil, whose Servants they were, and still be, who act in malice and cruelty. 2. What cruelty hath he exercised towards Man-kind? what ruin hath he brought upon the World, and on the Souls of Men? (3.) How many Millions hath he sent by his cursed temptations to Hell? how many Hundred Thousands of Godly Christians hath he Murdered, and caused to be Tormented with unhuman cruelty? (4.) But what was all this to his attempting to murder the Son of God himself, or the Lord of Life and Glory?

IX. The Subtilty of the Devil renders him a terrible Enemy, where Strength cannot prevail oft times, Policy does, and many by craft have done more than could have ever been done by power, now the Devils subtilty is exceeding great, we (saith Paul) are not ignorant of his devices: But too many there are that perceive them not, we should labour to stand against the wiles of the Devil. It was by his craft he overcome our First Parents; the Serpent by his subtilty beguiled Eve; yea, and Adam too, he hath his wiles to keep Sinners from closing with Christ, and ruin the ungodly, and he hath his devices also to ensnare, deceive and ruin, if possible, believers; observe some of his devices also.

1. He chuseth the most advantageous Seasons to tempt and allure Sinners. 2. He manageth his temptations in such ways and methods that shews his great subtilty.

3 In his making use of fit Instruments to carry on his designs, in respect of the one and the other, he knows how to assault young Converts, by filling them up with Pride and vain glory; he way-lays such that fall into great afflictions, causing them to despair, and to think God does not love them, because he afflicts them; he will be sure if possible, to defame, or render odious, such as do him the most mischief, as the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and spoil the peace of the Churches: He observes the weakest place of that Fort he designs to attack, and there make his assaults, also comes upon poor Saints, when they are a Sleep, or off of their Watch,

*See Mr.
Brook's re-
medies a-
gainst Sa-
tan's devi-
ces.*

Mat. 4. 5.

2 Cor. 11.
14.

Watch, or in a secure State : He acts sometimes like a Black, and yet can appear also as a White Devil, *or Transform himself into an Angel of Light*; he observes every Man's natural Temper, and suits his Temptations accordingly; he sometimes appears as a Friend, when his design is to Murder and Destroy, like a treacherous Enemy; he strives to get Ill Persons into the Church, to hinder the peace and increase thereof, and to expose the whole to reproach; he knows how to retreat and leave his House as a debauched black Devil, and to return again when his Palace is swept and garnished with the Paint of seeming Holiness, and outward Zeal and Piety; if it be but empty of true Faith and saving Grace, he matters not how zealous Men are for outward sanctity, if they are in a false way, he will rather promote their external holiness, than go about to hinder it, he is not more for Discord in the true Church, than he is for Unity in the false; in a Word, there is not such a Politician in the World like to the Devil, he knows he cannot force, and therefore he will intice.

X. The Devil is a *formidable Enemy*, because he is unwearied, he will not be discouraged if he miss Ten times in carrying his designs and purposes; nay, after a Thousand defeats he will attempt again, hoping to prevail at last; hence the Apostle gives the Saints a needful caution to be vigilant, because of the unweariness and great diligence of their adversary the Devil, who walks about seeking whom he may devour; it is not whom he would, but whom he may, or such God permitteth him to devour; tho' Satan hath worked hard to destroy the Souls of Sinners near Six Thousand Years, yet he is no more weary than he was when he first began, and therefore a dreadful Enemy.

Rev. 12.
12.

XI. The Devil is a *formidable Adversary*, in these *last Days* more than ever, because he is come down in great wrath, knowing his time is but short, therefore wo to the Inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea; my Brethren tho' the beginning of this his coming down was many Years ago, when he was thrown out of the Church as a persecuting Devil, in the time of *Constantine the Great*, yet now he knowing his time is very short indeed, he is in more rage than ever, and from hence it is that he strives to foment Wars and Slaughters in Kingdoms and Nations; and to disturb the Churches of Christ with horrid Errors and Heresies, and to drown the World that way if he can, and fill *Sion* also with strife, discord and contentions, which certainly abound now more than ever, and all

The Devil is now in greater wrath and rage than ever.

is but the effects of Satan's rage, malice, and fury; nay, and we may expect it will be every Day worse and worse, as he grows nearer and nearer the end of his Reign and Tyranny; therefore most dismal times must be looked for, yea such Temptations and Tribulations over the whole World that never was since the beginning thereof, or since Man dwelt upon the Earth, and it will continue until Jesus Christ sets up his visible Kingdom, who will take hold of him, and bind this Dragon for a Thousand Years.

XII. And lastly, Satan is a dreadful and terrible Enemy, because he is Armed, our Saviour calls him a *Strong Man Armed*.

1. His Armour may be his great Power, he is Cloathed as you heard with power and might, which is such Armour that no meer Man is able to encounter with him. *What is Satan's Armour?*

2. He is filled also with malice and revenge, which is as Armour to him, moreover his Pride is as a Coat of Mail, his power creates in him great Confidence, and this fills him with Pride, as it is said of the *Leviathan*, his Scales are his Pride, they are joyned one to another, they stick together that they cannot be sundred; Strength, Confidence and Pride is the Devils Shield, or Armour, by which means he is very fierce and undaunted, so that the Darts of a Sinner unarmed, are not regarded by him, but like the *Leviathan*, Darts are counted as Stubble, he laugheth at the shaking of the Spear, all the Weapons of meer Creatures unarmed, he esteemeth as Straw. *Job. 15, 16, 17.*

3. the wonderful Success he hath had, and Victories obtained, is as Armour to him, he having Conquered Millions, and subdued the whole World; all Nations are become as Stubble to his Bow, and as a prey to his Teeth.

4. Moreover utter despair of ever obtaining favour with God, Arms him against poor Mortals, he knows that he shall have no Quarter given to him, no Terms of Peace offered him for ever, and therefore will give no Quarter to any he can subdue and overcome; nothing renders an Enemy more fierce and cruel than the Thoughts of this; what mischief will not that Gyant, that Tyrant do, that knows he shall have no Pity shewed him, no Pardon, no Mercy given to him. And this hardens Satan's Heart against God, and his hard Heart and final despair is as Armour of Proof that cannot be Pierced. *The Devil is Armed with utter despair, which makes him desperate.*

There is no Repentings, no Relentings, no Sorrow in Devils, after all the wrongs and mischiefs done to Mortals,

this

F

No,

no, no, therefore his hardness and despair is as Armor, that none can touch, but one that is more Mighty and more Strong than he.

Sin Arms the Devil to the ruin of Sinners.

5. Sin also is as Armor to him where Sin reigns, the Devil is Armed, a Sinful, Depraved, Hard, Rebellious and an Unbelieving Heart Arms the Devil, and makes him irresistible by such Mortals in, whom Sin predominates, and the changing of the Heart, of that Enmity that is in the carnal Mind, tends to disarm the Devil, and over such Souls he hath but little Power.

Satan Armed by Gods broken Law.

6. God's Law being broken and violated, is as a Sword in Satan's Hand, by which he Kills and Wounds unto Death, great Multitudes; the Devil knows how to use Believers Sword to Wound them, and oft times doth so; but as the Law being broke is called the strength of Sin, so it is the Armour and Strength of Satan also, by which means no Man in an unrenewed State can get out of the Devils Hands: Do you not see, faith he, how your God in his Law Curses you, and for your sins Hates you, and how this broken Law lays you slain and dead at my Foot; nay, that God that Made you, hath left you, and given you up into my Hands, and I have Power over you, and will dwell, nay Reign in and over you, do what you can, you cannot, shall not get out of my Hand; there let your Hearts take pleasure in Sin and all Unrighteousness, and deny your selves of nothing that is either Sweet Pleasant, or Profitable to the Flesh, so much to the first thing.

Secondly, I shall shew you why Satan must be subdued in a Sinner that is converted, and his Power destroyed in his Soul.

Satan will not be intreated to let go his Captives.

1. Because he will not be intreated, there is no perswading the Devil to yield up his Palace, no, no, he cannot be prevailed with by Flattery, as some Cruel Tyrants have been: If Satan be not destroyed and overcome by force, he will hold his own for ever, there are no Devices against him, or subtle stratagems that any poor sinner can invent, to Supplant or Countermine him, many a strong and cruel Enemy whom Men could not spoil nor destroy by Force and Power, have been utterly overcome, defeated, and spoiled by Policy; but Satan is too great a Politician this way, to loose his strong Hold.

Satan has all Men naturally in Chains.

2 Tim. 2. 26.

2. The Devil must be subdued in the Sinners Heart that is converted, because he hath them all in his Chains, and they are his meer Slaves, and Captives, nay he takes them Captive by him at his Will: There is not one Man nor Woman in the World, but naturally

are the Captives of this Cruel and Merciless Devil, he rules in the Hearts of *Eph. 2. 2. all the Children of Disobedience.*

3. Because Grace cannot enter into that Heart where the Devil Reigns, nor will, nor indeed can Jesus Christ dwell therein; for wherever Christ dwells he Reigns, Sirs it is impossible for two Princes that are directly opposite in their Nature, Ends, and Designs, to Reign in or over one and the same Subject, now thus Sin is contrary to Grace, so is Grace absolutely contrary unto Sin, and as the Devil is an unreconcilable Enemy to Jesus Christ, or an Implacable adversary in his very Nature to him, so the Pure and Holy Jesus Hates and Abhors Satan, and as the Devil seeks to be revenged on Christ, so the Lord Jesus in his whole Design, seeks to destroy and overcome the Devil; therefore if Grace and Jesus Christ enters into the Heart of a sinner, the Power and Dominion of Satan must be destroyed in him.

Thirdly. I shall shew you why none but Christ can Subdue the Devil.

When I say none but Christ can, I mean no Man on Earth is, nor ever was able by any Power of his own, or by any power short of, or besides the Almighty and Irresistible strength of Jesus Christ, could, or can do it.

1. Because Satan is set forth in the Scripture to be much stronger than Man, and more cunning; and being an Angel, he exceeds Man in Wisdom also. But what I have said, in shewing what a Prince Satan is, fully demonstrates this to be as I say.

The Devil stronger than Man.

2. Because God hath laid our help upon Christ only, as being one able and mighty to save Sinners; and to this end Christ also came into the World, for this purpose *1. Joh. 3. 8. the Son of God was Manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.*

God laid help on Christ.

What need was there for Christ to come into the World to this End and Purpose, if Man had been able to have destroyed this strong Enemy Satan.

That mighty one to destroy the Devil.

3. None but Christ can subdue Satan in the Sinners Heart, because he that doth this, must first bind this strong Man Armed, and take away also all his Armor, and what Man on Earth can do this? But these things our Lord in this Parable positively affirms.

He that subdues the Devil, must first bind him and disarm him, which none could do but Christ only.

4. Because it is Jesus Christ alone that hath subdued him, and broke his Head, as it was promised to our First Parents he should do, moreover that broken remaining Power that Satan has left, none but God can destroy, God shall Bruise Satan under your feet shortly, he that hath over-

Christ alone overcome and conquered the Devil, he only can subdue and destroy him, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He that can't destroy Sin and Death, can't destroy the Devil. 5. None but Christ can subdue Satan, because none but he can make an end of Sin and destroy Death, if the Works of the Devil are not destroyed, the Devil is not subdued: Sin is the grand Work of Satan, and Death is the Wages and Punishment thereof: Now Sin and Death, none hath, nor could destroy but Jesus Christ, and this he hath done, and took our Nature upon him to this end, *That through Death he might destroy him that had*

Heb. 2. 14. the power of Death, and deliver them, who through the fear of Death, were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage. Where Sin remains in its full power, there the Devil lives and reigns, and Death also Triumphs over all such Sinners, they are Dead in Sin, and liable to Eternal Death; and since none can destroy Sin and Death but Jesus Christ, none but he alone can destroy the Devil.

He that destroys the Devil, destroys his Image in the Sinners Heart, and Stamps the Image of God therein. 6. None can destroy Satan, but he that destroys and utterly spoils his Image, and stamps the Image of God in the same Soul; but this is done by Christ alone: Can any Man utterly deface and spoil the Image of Satan in his own Soul, and Form the Image of God in himself? what Mortal will affirm that? Besides Man lies spiritually Dead in sin, naturally even slain at Satan's Feet, and what can such dead and lifeless Creatures do against the strong Man Armed, can they subdue this terrible Enemy?

APPLICATION.

1. From hence we may infer that there is cause enough why we should fear the Power and Malice of Satan, so as not to think he is a small or weak Enemy, or fear him so as never to make head against him, by any power of our own.

2. We from hence also may infer that it is no wonder the World is so spoiled, overcome, and blinded by the Devil, you hear what a strong and subtil Enemy he is.

3. Moreover we infer from hence, that this World is an Evil World, a Dangerous and Perilous World, because it hath such a multitude of strange and malicious Devils in it, who go up and down and defile all places. O! who would desire to live in this World! we live here not only among Men, like the Devil, but also among Devils, amongst multitudes of Devils.

Exhortation. O! Admire and Praise the Holy and ever Blessed God for sending a Saviour, such a Saviour, such a Mighty Saviour,

as Jesus Christ is, into this World, none but a Saviour Cloathed with Almighty Power, could save us from this strong Man Armed, or subdue and vanquish the Devil: And indeed from hence it appears, that Jesus Christ is God, because none but the most High God could destroy Satan, the God of this World, and from hence Christ is able to save all that fly unto him, *he is mighty to save, until one stronger than he binds the strong Man*, is a meer Man, stronger than Satan? or is any besides the most High God able to bind Satan, and throw him out of his Palace?

Quest. How hath Christ Destroyed, or Conquered the Devil.

Christ in his Life, and by his Death Destroyed the Devil. Ans. By Death, He by Death destroyed Death and Devils also. Christ subdued Satan in his Life, this Enemy set upon our Lord; but was utterly put to flight in the Combats he had with him, nay, by his spotless Life, and painful Death, our Lord destroyed Sin, the work of the Devil, and answered all the Demands of the Law, also by his Death and Resurrection, *he spoiled Principalities Col. 2. 15. and Powers, and made a shew of them openly.*

2. By taking from him all his Armour. *How Christ hath disarmed the strong Man.* (1.) he has spoiled and divested him of all his Power, bruising and breaking his Head: Sirs, the strong Man is Wounded, he is a Maimed Devil now. (2.) Jesus Christ hath out-done the Devil in Wisdom, all Satan's Policy in one day was Defeated, and turned into Foolishness, that way he thought to have destroyed our Captain, and for ever have prevented our Recovery, he himself Sin, and Death, and all Enemies were subdued, no doubt when Satan had brought Christ under Death (to which end he entered into Judas) he thought he had done our Lord's business, and ours also, but thereby he was Disarmed of that part of his Armour. (3.) by destroying of Sin, in its the Guilt, Power and Punishment thereof, our Lord took away the chiefest of all his Armour. (4.) by his perfect Obedience to the Law, and by bearing the Penalty thereof, (which we lay Obnoxious unto) he Disarmed him of another piece of his Armour. (5.) Our Lord Disarmeth this strong Man, by making all Satan's Wrath and Fury to turn to the good and advantage of his Saints, his Church and People. (6.) By sending the Gospel, or Gracious Revelation thereof, our Saviour hath scattered and expelled that Darkness which the Devil brought upon the World, and thereby discovereth those Errors, Heresies, Idolatries and Superstitions, that every where abounded therein, *He hath brought light, and Immortality to the light, through the Gospel,* 2 Tim. 2. 10.

spel, so that Satan's Craft and Cunning is all laid open, and himself utterly vanquished, and brought to shame, and his Kingdom overthrown for ever.

Quest. *How doth Christ Bind this Strong Man, &c, and so spoil his House.*

Ans^r. The Lord Christ doth this by entering into the sinners Heart, by his Spirit he binds him, so that he can make no resistance.

How Jesus Christ binds the Strong Man.

2. Also by restraining Satan, or putting him into Chains, that he can go no further then our Lord permits him, also what hurt soever he is suffered to do to his Saints, his Church, and People, our Lord makes it turn to their Good, and for their Profit and Advantage, whether it be done more Immediately by himself in those suggestions and Temptations, whereby he fixeth and troubles the Saints, or what he doth by his Servants and Diabolical Emissaries. Moreover he spoils Satan's House, by pulling of it quite down, and New Building it, so that it may become a fit Habitation for himself to Dwell and Reign in through the Spirit: By this means also Sin (which is his chief Goods) is destroyed, the Power thereof being broken, and the poor Believer delivered from the Guilt and Punishment thereof, also hardness of Heart, Ignorance, and Unbelief are spoiled, which were Satan's Goods, so that he hath in that Soul no Goods to boast of, nor a House to dwell in.

O! What Consolation and Comfort is here.

Comfort.

1. For poor Sinners, your strong and cruel Enemy Satan is overcome. Almighty Jesus, hath Conquered and Slain him, the strong Man Armed is Subdued, your Adversary the Devil is

brought down, and lies mangled in his Blood (as I may so say) at the Foot of your blessed Saviour, what tho' he hath as yet possession of your Hearts, cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ to give you Faith, and pray him to come in to your assistance; if you get the Shield of Faith, and manfully in the Name and Strength of Jesus Christ resist him, he will fly from you, be not afraid of his Power nor Policy, but tell him he is a Beaten and Conquered Enemy, that Christ the Seed of the Woman hath broke his Head. But,

2. The chiefest Comfort is yours that are believers.

1. Satan is cast out of your House, a stronger than he hath appeared for you actual Relief. (2.) Your House is now new made, and *Christ dwells in your hearts by Faith*, and by the Spirit, whose Habitation you are now become. (3.) Satan can never return again to get Power over you, nor Rule in you; *because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the World.* You have through Christ overcome the wicked one (4.) Christ is your Captain, he hath espoused your Cause, nay, 'tis his own Cause; and whenever Satan Assaults you, Christ will come into your assistance, but be sure sleep not; be always on your watch, and never engage this Enemy in your own Strength. Remember *Paul* when he was buffeted he *fought the Lord thrice*, O! be much in Prayer. (5.) Know tho' your own Inherent Grace may not be enough, yet the Grace that is in Christ is, *my Grace is sufficient for thee.* --- Let our condition be what it will, his Grace is sufficient, and his Love an everlasting: *We are more than Conquerors thro' him* that hath loved us. Eph. 3. 17.
1 Joh. 4. 4.
2 Cor. 12. 8.

*The Parable of the unclean Spirit, gone out of
Man, &c.*

S E R M O N VI.

M A T. XII. 43, 44, 45.

*When the unclean Spirit is gone out of
a Man, he walketh through dry
places, seeking Rest, and finding
none, Ver. 43.*

*Then he saith, I will return into my
House from whence I came out; and
when he is come, he findeth it empty,
swept, and garnished, Ver. 44.*

*Then goeth he and taketh with him se-
ven other Spirits more wicked than
himself, and they enter in and dwell
there; and the last State of that
Man is worse than the first, Ver.
45.*

Preach'd
August 10.
1690.

THis place of Holy Scripture is gene-
rally acknowledged to be hard to
be understood; most Expositors and
Annotators (I have met with) say but
little to it.

Some call it a Parable, and others a
Paraboliſcal Speech or a Similitude.

The Scope
and design
of this
Parable.

By the Scope and Coherence of the
place it is evident our Saviour ſetteth
forth by it the direful State and Condi-
tion of the Scribes and Pharisees, and
other People of the Jews, who boasted
of their External Holineſs, or ſeeming
Sanctity, they being not Prophane or
Notorious Sinners; or as they them-
ſelves fooliſhly ſaid, *Not Extortioners,
Unjuſt, or Adulterers*, like as the *Publi-
cans* were, *Luke 18. 11.* Yet the Lord
Jeſus ſheweth by this Parable how they
were deceived: for though they were
delivered from that prophane and de-
bauched unclean Spirit, yet was their
State worſe than the State of groſs and
wicked Sinners, which is ſignified by
the entering into them ſeven other un-
clean Spirits, worſe or more wicked than
the firſt that were gone out of them.

That the Words may be applied to
them and other People of that Generati-
on, is evident from the ſequel of ver.

45. *Even ſo ſhall it be with the People of
this froward Generation.* Yet no doubt
our bleſſed Saviour in this place may
have Reference to a Man in the like
State; or as *Beza*, *Caterum quum Spi-
ritus impurus exierit a quopiam, &c.* as well
as unto that People who were carried
away with curſed Hypocriſie.

When the unclean Spirit, &c.

By the unclean Spirit, τὸ ἀκαθάρτον πνεῦ-
μα is certainly meant the Devil, cal-
led, an unclean Spirit. Mark 5. 8.

1. Because he hath loſt his own Ori-
ginal Purity, or Clean and Holy Na-
ture, he being at firſt Created an Angel
of Light, having like Holineſs before he
fell, which the bleſſed and Elect of An-
gels of Heaven have. The parts
opened, why
Satan is
called an
unclean Spi-
rit.

2. Because he is ſo univerſally filthy
and abominable vile in himſelf, and ſo
remains and will abide for ever, there
being no Poſſibility for him to become
better, he being left and forſaken of
God, without, any means afforded
of being purged from his unclean and fil-
thy Nature.

3. Because he is not only unclean in
himſelf, but alſo defileth the Hearts and
Spirit of all ſuch Perſons who receive and
entertain him, nay, all the Pollution of
our Nature, yea, the whole Nature of
humane Race, was originally from that
Compliance and yielding to him by our
Firſt Parents; 'tis this unclean Spirit
that hath poiſoned and notoriously De-
filed the whole Man both Body and Soul
in all its Powers and Faculties, and not
the whole Man only, but the whole
World alſo. And as this is naturally
the filthy and miſerable Condition of all
Creatures, ſo thoſe who yield to his
Temptations, come to have farther Pol-
lution and Defilement cleave to their
Hearts and Lives. Sin is an unclean
thing, and it makes all ſuch loathſom and
abominable in the ſight of God, who are
overcome by it. Though all naturally
are vile and filthy, yet there are De-
grees of Uncleanness, ſome are worſe
than others, more wicked, and ſo more
like to the Devil, in whom his very I-
mage or Likeneſs clearly may be
ſeen.

4. He may alſo be called an unclean
Spirit, because he continually inticeth
and ſtrives to draw Men to Filthineſs,
and to all manner of Uncleanness, being

an utter Enemy to all Purity and true Holiness, envying all those who love it, and strive to promote it.

How Satan may be said to go out of a Man. *Is gone out of a Man.*] Not that the Man was actually possessed with the Devil (as some may think) though 'tis very like the Lord Jesus may borrow this Parabolical Speech from a Person actually possessed; but he sheweth hereby that all wicked Men are in a mystical and spiritual sense possessed with the Devil; all Graceless Sinners have an unclean Spirit in them. Where Sin Predominates and Rules in the Heart, there the Devil has Possession; that Heart is Satan's Throne where he Reigns and sways the Scepter: Satan was said to enter into Judas*; and to fill the Heart of Ananias†: both these had this unclean Spirit in them; the one was plagued or possessed with a Treacherous Devil, and the other with a Lying Devil. Hence 'tis also said, that Satan, who is the Prince of the Power of the Air, both *worketh* and *ruleth* in the Children of Disobedience.

Ephes. 2. *Gone out*] Either by the Power and Force of the Grace of God in its common Operations he was thrown out; or else, through Policy, he voluntarily leaves his House for a time, with an Intention to return again with a stronger force: Some adhere to the first sense, and others to the last.

Gone out,] i. e. as a Carnal Prophane, or Black Devil, for so he may be said to be in all Debauched Persons; and in this respect he may be said to be gone out or thrown out of the Pharisees, and other false and counterfeit Professors; he may not be able to keep them any longer under the Power of open and gross Prophane-ness. And from hence the Pharisee proudly breaks forth, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Why may not Satan be expelled or forced out of his House in some degree, by the common Influences of the Spirit? All generally grant that legal Convictions, and the Operation of common Grace through the Workings of natural Conscience, have some considerable Power in them to reform the Life of a wicked Person. Nor can I think Satan would yield to any Soul voluntarily so far as to let him become so much as Civilized if he could help it; therefore I rather think he was forced to give place, as not being able to hold his own (in some respect) as formerly, although whilst the Creature abides in his Natural State, not having a changed Heart, Satan hath possession of that Soul still in a great measure; and therefore he leaves, no doubt, a strong Guard behind him,

when he is said to go out, though they may be said to hide themselves, or retire into some lurking-holes and Corners of the House, or rather of the Heart. Satan cannot, doubtless, keep possession always, so far as to hold Men under the Power of gross and scandalous Sins, or cause them to continue openly Prophane; such Power and Virtue is there in the common Operation of the Spirit, or in legal Convictions and workings of Natural Conscience, together with the help of the External Ministration of God's Word, and by the means of Afflictions, and those severe Providences and Dispensations, under which wicked Men may be exercised, that it may tend to make them become other Men, though it cannot change their Hearts, yet it may make a great change in their Lives, by which means they may look like Saints, and talk like Saints and sanctified Persons, and be taken for such too by the truly Godly; nay, and that which is worse, may conclude within themselves they are Converted, since their former Enemy, that debauched gross and unclean Spirit is gone out of them. I am so far of the mind of James Arminius, that Man by the means of that common Help and Power God affords to all in general, may leave the gross Acts of Wickedness, let Satan do what he can; which has been often evinced by that Terror severe humane Laws have had on the Consciences of wicked and ungodly Persons. I am persuaded were there a Law that he that swore an Oath, or was Drunk, or committed Adultery, should have his Right Hand cut off, or be made a Slave all the days of his Life, we should see Men would get Power over those Temptations of Satan, and neither be Drunk nor commit Adultery.

He walketh through dry places.]

1. Satan is said in that of *, *To go to and fro in the Earth, and to walk up and down in it.* Satan here speaks, saith Mr. Caryl, like a Prince; therefore saith he; "Some conceive this was the Prince of Devils that is mentioned in this Text, or Beelzebub the chief of Devils". He walketh about to view his Provinces and Territories, from one place to another, but he doth not walk to and fro as an *Idle Peripatetick*, but to enquire, to observe, and consider, as a Spy, to search all things and Persons as he passeth along. Therefore;

2. This noteth that Satan is a diligent Enemy; if he hath lost a little Ground, or is worsted in one Soul, he will try what Power and Success he can find in another.

3. It shews that he is an unquiet and restless Spirit, being cast out of Heaven, he can rest no where; and if he be forced out of some Men at one time, he will tempt others; nay if the Servant hath a little worsted him, he, to revenge himself, will fall perhaps in the next place upon the Son; if he lose some place in his own House, he will see if he cannot get into the Temple of the Holy Ghost; or, if he is forced to leave wet and filthy places, in which he delights, he will walk through dry places, and see what he can meet with there.

4. Satan's great Work which he employs himself in and about, is, no doubt, to get into the Heart of Men to dwell, nay, rule there, and so subject them to himself, and Defile and Pollute them one way or other.

What is meant by Satans seeking rest.

Dry places, seeking Rest, and finding none] i. e. where there is no Water or Moisture, or not enough to refresh him; he has a cruel Thirst upon him, and unless he can meet with that he seeketh, which is to make a Prey of the Souls of Men, he is in a restless state, like a Thirsty Person who walking through dry Places, can find no Water. There are some sorts of Men that afford Satan no Content nor Satisfaction; he seeketh for that oft-times which he finds not; he is not pleased to be as a Traveller, to pass through a Place and stay, (as it were but for a Night) but would fain find Rest, i. e. have a Place or Heart to dwell in, and take sole Possession of. I find one of the Ancients, who writing on this dark Expression, speaketh thus: *So long as he dwelleth not in me, he is said to seek Rest, he is grieved and vexed, &c.*

What is meant by dry places.

1. Dry places, are commonly Clean Places, or Places where there is no Dirt or Mire; and Satan that unclean Spirit, is like a Swine, i. e. he delights in Filthy and Miery Places, dry places signifie his assaulting the Saints, or seeking to get into sanctified Hearts, or Hearts renewed by the special Grace of God, and thoroughly purged by the Blood of Christ, in whom that filthy sink of Sin and Pollution, is not only dried up, but the Heart is changed and made New, and so no more a House or Habitation for this unclean Spirit, but is become the Temple of the Holy Ghost, or a Habitation for God through the Spirit. And these Men's Hearts are unto Satan, like dry Places to a thirsty and restless Person: For as the Holy Spirit cannot rest, nor take up his abode in Filthy and Polluted Hearts; so the Devil, that wicked Spirit, can find no Rest nor Place of Abode in renewed and sanctified Hearts. And as it is no suitable House

or Habitation for him; so likewise Believers have one dwelling in them, strong enough to keep Satan out: for *stranger* (saith the Apostle*) *is he that is in us, than he which is in the World:* *1 John 2. and again he saith †, *Ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you; and ye have overcome the Wicked one: He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not:* †1 John 5. shall not so touch him as to enter into his Heart, and take up his Dwelling, or get Possession of him any more; and therefore these Men's Hearts, i. e. the Hearts of true Sanctified Christians, I conclude are meant here by our Saviour, which are to Satan as dry places, where there is no dwelling or abiding for him.

2. As dry Places are clean places; so likewise they are commonly barren Places, Places where little or nothing will grow; Satan is for such Hearts that will receive his evil Seed, i. e. suited and fit to close in with his cursed Temptations, which are like to moist or miery places; such as all corrupt and unregenerate Hearts are, in others that bitter and evil Seed which this unclean Spirit sows, will not take Root: Or if it should so fall out, that through the Carelessness and Negligence of Believers, and strength of Temptations, Satan should drop some of his cursed Seed in them, and it should meet with a little of the old corrupt Nature (there being in the best of Men an unregenerate part) yet it would soon wither and come to nothing; for their Hearts are, (as I said before) no proper Soil for the Seed of the wicked one, therefore if he gets in a little, he is soon turned out again; so that in a Word, according to the Import of this saying of Christ, (as I conceive) these Mens Hearts are to the Devil, like dry places, where he can find no Rest.

3. Dry Places are for the most part Places least Inhabited for want of Water; the Hearts of Saints are like Uninhabitable Places to Satan, in them he cannot find those proper Accommodations which he needs and must have where he dwells. But since he can find no Dwelling here, no Diabolical Comfort nor Refreshment, i. e. no Abode in Godly Hearts; he saith, *I will return into my House from whence I came out,* ver. 44.

I will return: Not that he was quite routed and vanquished before, 'tis called still his House, he lays claim and pleads Propriety in him and Interest still. Therefore this Man's Heart was not become the Temple of the Holy Spirit, he was gone out, or forced out before, as a Swearing, Cheating, Whoring, or Drunken Devil, &c. and this might inrage him

What is meant by Satans returning.

him, and move him to attempt some greater Enterprize, which we have already spoken to. Satan doth not love to loose or let go any strong hold he hath of carnal and prophane Persons; but seeing he had received some small Defeat, he sets upon the truly Godly Christian; like as when he was cast out of Heaven unto the Earth, he presently persecuted the Woman which brought forth the Man Child, *Rev. 12. 13.* When he saw he could not uphold his Kingdom by Paganism, nor farther execute his Malice by Pagan Emperors, but was routed and overcome as to that Power he had, (as our late Annotators observe) to let us know that he retains his Malice though he hath lost his former strength, he goes on in pursuing the Church of God. Even so, I say, he having been forced to give way before (as was hinted) he walks about to seek Revenge upon the Saints; but they being to him like dry Places to a thirsty Man, or as an Inn to a Traveller, viz. no resting Place, he resolves to return to his own House, that is, the Hearts of Hypocritical Professors, such as the Pharisees were: And this returning of his into his old House, imports (as I conceive) his coming again in another form or shape, and with a Resolution to get better and more firmer and surer Possession than he had before.

Now he appears as an Angel of Light. Nor can we suppose he had no Party left in the said House when he went out. Parables must not be strained too far; we ought not to scrue or make too severe a Scrutiny upon every Phrase; therefore we cannot think when he is said to return to his former House, or attempt afresh the false and counterfeit Christian, that he hath quite given over his Designs in assaulting sanctified Persons; but he cannot endure to be an Underling, he is for kinging it in the Souls of Men, would fain reign and sway the Scepter there, and where he cannot rule and domineer, he hath no Rest, nor can be satisfied. And therefore he may be said to return as an exiled Prince, and lest he should be discovered, he puts on a new Garb, and is now contented his Captive should become religious, that so the deluded Sinner might not discern him, but take him for his lawful Sovereign; as if he should say, I will yield to you now; if you will be a Professor and become religious, ye shall, but I will dwell with you notwithstanding; here is room enough for me as a white Devil, tho' not as a black one.

[And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.]

Empty; That is, the Spirit of God

was not there, true Grace was not there, Christ dwelleth there; that House may be said to be empty, where God and Jesus Christ are not; nor is it a hard and difficult thing for the unclean Spirit to enter into such a Soul, since there was no Enemy strong enough to keep him out; but contrariwise, the place seems to be rather prepared and made fit for him, to take up his abode in this new religious and spiritual Appearance; nay, here is not only room for himself, but the House is so empty, that many other unclean Spirits more wicked than himself, may have their abode and dwelling there also. Satan saith, *I will return to my House, &c.* He speaks as if he was sure enough that this Sinner was his own, and therefore should without any difficulty enter in, in that new Disguise in which he now appears; and accordingly 'tis said, he findeth it empty, and also swept; but doubtless some Dirt and Filth was yet in some Hole or Corner: For like as a lazy and slothful House-wife uses to sweep a little of the loose Dust and Filth in the open and middle of the Room, and lets many secret Corners lie foul as before, and may be leaves the Dirt behind the Door out of the publick view of People: So the false and counterfeit Christian reforms his Life in the sight of Men; or like the Pharisees, makes clean the out-side of the Cup and Platter; but their Hearts are still polluted, and as vile as ever.

Swept, but not with a proper and fit Broom; 'tis said to be swept, but alas 'twas only with the Beesom of legal Reformation; and how far that will cleanse the unclean and wicked Person, is known to all understanding Men; it only takes away the Filth of gross and scandalous Sins; therefore said by St Peter, *To escape the Corruption that is in the World;* that is, the prophane World, i. e. vile and notorious Sins and Pollutions.

And garnished, or painted; which may signifie that seeming Sanctity, moral Vertue, and the common Graces of the Spirit. Our Saviour elsewhere compares Pharisaical Holiness, to painting or garnishing of a Sepulchre; *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead Mens Bones, and all Uncleanness: Ye build (saith he) the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous.* And thus Pharisaical and Hypocritical Professors may be said to be garnished, i. e. they seem glorious to Men, who only judge by the outward Appearance, and know not the Heart; there may be a great change of Life, a beautiful outside, and yet the evil and vicious Habits and Pollutions of the Heart

What is intended by the House being empty swept and garnished.

Mat. 23. 27, 29.

Heart may be still the same, and not changed. And remarkable is this Phrase of our Saviour [*garnished*], which we know is commonly a curious piece of Art: Men by their Ingenuity strive to imitate Nature; they will draw the Face of a Man, &c. with curious Painting, very exact, so that it much resembles the Person's natural Face, yet 'tis not the same, 'tis but a piece of Paint, an artificial Invention: Even so in like manner by the Improvement of a Man's natural Parts, common Grace, Light and Knowledge, he may appear in the view and sight of Men, as a true Child of God, and may talk and discourse like a Saint, read and hear God's Word, nay, and pray also with much seeming Devotion and Piety, and may likewise bridle many unruly Lusts, and gross Enormities of Life, and give Alms to the poor, insomuch that he may very exactly resemble a true and sincere Christian, and be taken by all Godly people to be indeed such an one; but notwithstanding all, 'tis but an artificial Piece, 'tis but like a curious Paint, or vain-glorious Garnish; it is not the Image of God, it is not the new Creature; though it looks like it, much resembles it, yet it is not the same; for the Man is a meer Hypocrite, a counterfeit Christian, the work upon him being only the Product of natural Improvements, and not the effects of the saving Operations of the Holy Spirit. Nay, and Satan, though an unclean Spirit, likes to dwell in such a House, I mean such a Heart, thus swept and garnished, as well as in the Heart of a vile and debauched Person: And evident it is, that this sweeping or external cleansing with the Broom of outward Reformation, or the Garnish of moral Righteousness, common Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, Prayer, hearing the Word, partaking of the Sacraments, and doing many good Works, cannot secure the Soul against Satan's Attempts, in order to his taking up his Habitation in such Persons Hearts.

Mr. Rich.
Allen's *Vindicta Pietatis*.

After I had Preached these Two Sermons, a Godly Friend who heard them, told me he had met with a Treatise of a worthy Author, who gives the same sense on this mysterious place of Scripture: He helped me to the Book which I was ignorant of, and I shall give you some brief Hints of what he hath said.

'When the unclean Spirit goeth out of a Man, &c. That Sinners are vile and abominable, (saith he) it is from that wicked Spirit, Satan, that dwells in them: Every Sinner is a Person possessed of a Devil; when a little reformed, they seem for a time to be

'dispossessed, &c. He walketh through dry Places; what these dry Places may be, is not easie to determine: Some by these *loca arida*, understand *loca vacua*, void empty Places, the Desarts and Wastes of the Earth, where he finds no body to attempt or molest.

'But could Satan, saith he, think to find Rest there where was no House for him to lay his Head in? Would the Tempter waste his time in seeking whom to devour in those waste Places, where he knew well enough there were none to be found? He knows too well where Sinners dwell, then to go to seek them where they are not; more like to find the Devil at a Market, than in a Wilderness. This therefore seems not to be the sense——

'Why may not, saith he, these dry Places be the Saints on Earth, the Fountain of whose Blood is dried up? in whom the Sun hath dried up their Dirt and Mire, in which this Swine loves to wallow, &c. [*He seeketh Rest*] this notes two things.

1. 'When the Devil is gone out of any Person, he is never at Rest till he is gotten in again, from whence he went out, or into some other Habitation, where he may do more Mischief: Like Children, like Father, 'tis said of some, so 'tis much more true of him, *He rests not but in doing Mischief*.

2. 'The Devil loves to dwell where he may be at Rest; that is, not from Work (his Rest is his Work) but from Resistance or Opposition, *i. e.* in carnal and unclean Hearts, &c.

[*Seeking Rest and finding none*] 'He goes, saith he, through these dry Places, from Saint to Saint, from Heart to Heart, in hope to find Entertainment, but is still disappointed; here's little Rest for me saith he to be had, these dry Places I see are no places for me, here's watching and wrestling and warring against me; so much praying, complaining against me, that there's no stay for me here——He go back to my old Habitation: And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished, a little cleaner and handsomer than when he left it. The Devil can allow Sinners a little Reformation; but tho' it be a little cleansed and garnished, yet it lies empty still, there's no Tenant hath taken it up, though the Devil went out, Christ was not let in, but there it lies void for the next that comes.

'Then he goeth and taketh seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the

'last state of that Man is worse than the first. Beware of a returning Devil; the Devil at his return often makes sevenfold worse Work than before he did. *Allen's Godly Fear*, p. 213, 214, 215, 216.

He modestly offers this as his Thoughts on the Place, and I find others confirming by some brief Hints the same things. I thought it not amiss to recite this Passage of his, as a farther Confirmation of the Exposition I have briefly given you of this dark Place of Scripture, not doubting but 'tis the sense and meaning of our Saviour.

Take Two or Three Points of Doctrine. Observe,

Doct. I.

1. *Satan is an unclean Spirit.* As God is the Author and Original of all true Holiness, so is Satan of all Sin and Wickedness: And as God's Nature is pure, so the Devil in his Nature is impure; all Purity proceeds from God, and all Sin proceeds from Satan; God strives to promote the one, and the Devil labours to promote the other: As God's Kingdom is set up in the World, and maintained by Holiness and spiritual Sanctity; so the Devil's Kingdom is set up and upheld by Sin and Filthiness. As God by his Spirit dwells in sanctified Hearts, so the Devil dwells in polluted and sinful Hearts: and as Christ makes that Man or Woman holy and clean where he makes his abode; so Satan makes those Souls where he takes up his Dwelling, unclean and abominably wicked. Moreover, as he who is truly Sanctified and made Holy, is said to be of God; so they that are wicked and ungodly, are said to be of the Devil *. All those who are spiritual and truly gracious are like to God, or bear some resemblance of him; and all unclean and wicked Persons are like to the Devil. These things considered, no marvel Satan is called an unclean Spirit.

* John 8.
1 John 3.
8, 12.

Doct. II.

2. *All prophane notorious and ungodly Sinners are in a woful state, the unclean Spirit is in them, their Hearts are Satan's Habitation.*

The Heart of Man was not originally Satan's House, nor hath he any just Right or Propriety in it; 'tis his by Usurpation and Conquest, as Men yield up themselves to him, and entertain his Temptations. Man both Body and Soul is the Lord's, he is his Creature; nor ought he to suffer any to dwell in him, much less to rule and sway the Scepter over him, but the Holy God. But as all Men as they come into the World, have wretched and cursed Natures,

through original Depravity; so ungodly Men actually have cast off God, their lawful and only Sovereign, and have embraced the wicked one, they have received, and do subject themselves to Satan that unclean and filthy Spirit, he is King and Lord over them. The Devil hath got Possession by Craft, he inticed our first Parents to open the Door to him, they gave him the first Entertainment, 'twas then he took Possession, and thereby at once corrupted all that are in the House; I mean, all the Faculties of the Soul to such a Degree, that they all naturally side with Satan, and are for him, and are filled with Enmity against God, and oppose and resist his Spirit, and rebel against the Light. Wicked Men had rather be under the tyrannical Government of the Devil, than to be ruled and governed by Jesus Christ: And from hence 'tis no wonder they rather chuse to have wicked earthly Rulers and tyrannical Kings to be over them, than to be subject to a Prince who is an Enemy to Wickedness, Tyranny and Oppression. This shews the Blindness and miserable State and Condition of all wicked and ungodly Men. We may further note also, Rom. 8.7.

3. *That Satan may lose some ground in Sinners Hearts, he may seem to be gone out of them, and they may become sober and civilized, and yet may be in the Gall of Bitterness, and their Hearts notwithstanding may be still Satan's Habitation.*

Let these Men change their Lives, and become other Men in the View of the World, alter their course of Life, yet they are miserable; Satan has spiritual Power and Dominion over them, he has a strong party in their Hearts, when he seems to be gone out, and knows they are his still, and owns them as his dwelling place. When he cannot meet with Entertainment in other places, when Saints afford him no Encouragement, but displease and despise him, and their Hearts are as dry places, he can nevertheless return at pleasure to his old Habitation, and there he enters and dwells. Let them change their Religion, yet they are Satan's Slaves still, he matters not if they leave Popery and cleave to Prelacy, and so become Protestants in general; nay, embrace a more refined sort of People, and take upon them a more strict Profession of Religion, yet still they belong to him, if they are not truly regenerated and renewed in their Souls; let them be *Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists*, it signifies nothing, they are still the same, and under Satan's Power and Dominion. O how miserably are some Men deceived, thinking

See before-
going Para-
ble.

Doct. IV.

thinking if they are reformed and become zealous for external Ordinances, and have taken up this or that form of Religion, and are taken for Saints by Men, that all is well, and they shall be saved! How did the Pharisees glory in their seeming Zeal and Piety, and flatter themselves, and yet wofully blinded, and in a damnable State and Condition? Note also, that,

4. *Morality, external Gifts and common Grace, are but like a vain Paint, a mere empty and artificial Garnish.*

They make a fair show in the Flesh, they pride it in themselves, and Men praise and admire them, but what doth all this signifie? they are still under a diabolical Power and Influence, and *two-fold more the Children of the Devil than they were before*: Nay, as I shall hereafter shew, rather Seven times worse than when they were openly wicked and prophane.

APPLICATION.

1. A Terror to Sinners. Tremble you that live wicked Lives, remember the unclean Spirit dwells in you, and has Power over you, your Hearts are his Habitation, he rules in you, and takes you Captive at his Will. If in this State you die, you are undone for ever.

2. See to it, you that are Professors, lest you are also deceived. What is a reformed Life without a changed Heart? To cast off the gross Acts of Sin, will not avail you any thing, without the evil Habits are broke, and you renewed in the Spirit of your Mind. Though you seem to be godly to Men, yet God knows your Hearts, and how they stand affected to him, and to true real Godliness. A form of Religion will never save you; and though you may have got some ground against Satan, and he seems to have left you, or is gone out, yet take heed he does not return again with greater strength, and get you into stronger Bonds now, than he had before. But because this will be more fully opened in the next place, I shall at present say no more to it now.

3. This also affords much Comfort to God's People. Satan sets upon you, and fain he would subject your Souls to himself, and take Possession of your Hearts, but he cannot prevail, you have got one in you who is stronger than Satan, who will preserve you to his Heavenly Kingdom. But no more at this time: I shall leave what I have said to the Blessing God.

S E R M O N VII.

M A T T H. 12.

43, 44, 45.

— *When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, &c.*

THE last Day I opened the several Parts of this place of Holy Scripture, in the usual Method I have all along taken in my Exposition of other parables, which I have already spoken to, according to that small measure of Light and Knowledge the Lord hath been pleased to bestow upon me. There remains one thing further to be done, and that is indeed the chief and most material of all, which is to shew you the sad State of the false and counterfeit Professor, out of whom the unclean Spirit is said to be gone, but yet is returned again with Seven other Spirits more wicked than himself. Our Blessed Lord saith, *The last State of that Man is worse than the first.* Now in what respect a painted Hypocrite, or one garnished only with common Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, may be said to be in a worse State than the open Prophane, I shall endeavour, God assisting, to demonstrate.

[Tis said, *Satan returned with Seven other Spirits, &c.*] Seven is a number of Perfection. I judge our Saviour designed hereby to shew that the Devil hath now got stronger hold and possession of such a Person by many degrees; many unclean Spirits, or worse and more dangerous Sins cleave to him than before, so that he is like to be perfectly miserable. But to proceed;

First; That which renders false Professors, or counterfeit Christians, to be in such a deplorable Condition, (which also evidently appeared in the *Pharisees*, and other People in that Generation, to whom primarily our Saviour refers, as the

*Morning
Exercise on
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*What is
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Seven other
worse Spi-
rits.*

*Mat. 12.
45.*

The first an
ignorant
Spirit under
clearer
Light.

the close of the 45th Verse shews) is, that great Ignorance that cleaves to them, notwithstanding their common Illuminations; which usually does consist in these Respects following.

Rev. 3. 17. *Hypocrites know not their woful State.*

1. *They know not their own miserable State, looking upon themselves to be rich and increased with Goods, and to have need of nothing:* As appears by that Charge of the Lord Christ against the Church of *Laodicea*, who were fallen into the like Condition; they think none knows more than themselves, inasmuch that they secretly condemn him who tells them how it is with them; and this rises from the consideration of that great Knowledge they conceit they have above others; *But now ye say, Ye see, therefore your Sin remains.* If your Ignorance were simple, (as if Christ should say) and not affected, or were you sensible of your blindness, then your Disease would not be so incurable: But now you say you see, and you doubt not but you are in a state of Happiness, and are the only People of God, and yet presumptuously refuse the way of your Relief and Salvation, and do not conclude you are under Guilt and Wrath, as indeed you are.

Men may
have a
changed
Life and no
change of
Heart.

2 Cor. 10.
12.

2. *Their Blindness and Ignorance consisteth, in that they cannot discern nor distinguish between a changed Heart and a changed Life, or between legal Reformation and true Regeneration.* They think, because their State seems so much better than it was before, in their own apprehension, and in the apprehension of others also, their Condition is good enough, they comparing themselves with themselves, beholding what a vast difference there is, or seems to be in respect of what they once were, when Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, &c. cannot but commend themselves to themselves: Once they saw themselves Sinners, and called themselves so, and were ashamed of their own sinful and wicked Lives; but now they are Righteous in their own conceit, and so have no need of any farther work, being arrived to that State of Holiness, (as they think) or that degree of Piety, to that Change, to that Conversion, that they conclude they need not seek for any other, and yet are deceived, and in the Gall of Bitterness. And hereby they seem to put themselves out of the Call of Jesus Christ, *who came to seek and to save that which was lost: Not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* Let Men think what they please, certainly there is no Devil like this Devil: If he can persuade a Man that he is whole, and not sick at all, and so needs no Physician; and that when

Mat. 18.
11.

the Gospel is preached to Sinners, and the danger of Unbelief is opened, yet it doth not affect him, nor concern him, he being become a righteous Person; what hopes can there be of such a one? Alas, the Ministers of Christ have received no Commission to offer Christ to any but to Sinners. Now these are not the Persons a precious Saviour is tendered unto, they see no want nor need of him, and therefore these are passed by, as such who need no Repentance.

3. *Their Blindness consisteth in their ignorance of God's Righteousness, not knowing what Righteousness it is that will render them accepted and justified in the sight of God; and so, like the poor Jews, go about to establish their own Righteousness, their own personal Righteousness, a home-spun Righteousness; 3.* they see no need to go to another, to be beholden to another.

Secondly; *Their Danger appears also from a proud Devil that is now entred into them.* Pride commonly accompanies Ignorance, and this abounds in the Heart of Man by Nature, and there it will predominate, till the Soul passes through an effectual Change, but it appears in none so fully, or to such a Degree, as in a Pharisaical Person; he cannot endure to think he is so poor as prophane and notorious Sinners are; what, go to his Neighbour's Door for every Morsel of Bread he eats, and for every draught of Drink! no, 'tis below him to beg, he thinks 'tis enough for Publicans and Sinners to do so. And indeed what need he go to be fed and clothed by another, that is full, and sees his Goods increased, and hath need of nothing? Faith empties the Soul, makes it poor, before it fills and enriches it. But this Man knows not what Faith is, nor the Life of it. Pride springs from an inordinate Self-love, and Self-flattery, are the Glasses in which a self-deceived Hypocrite looks in which he appears indeed that which daily, he is not. Self-love is a Multiplying, yea a Magnifying-Glass. These never had a true sight of themselves, never saw their own Poverty, and horrid pollution of their Nature; 'tis with them, as it was with the Apostle, before the Commandment came, they are alive and beautiful in their own Eyes.

Lucifer, as some pretend, is one of the chief of Devils, who is called also the *King of Pride*: If so, certainly he is one of those wicked Spirits that entred into this Person. Now what but infinite Power can throw out this Devil, this Pride, and bring this Soul to the foot of the Cross, and make it strike its swelling Sails to Jesus Christ, and become

A Proud
Devil enters

become nothing in himself, and to hate and loath his own Righteousness, by reason of that impurity and pollution that cleaves to every best Duty they do or can perform? Thus this unclean Spirit raises up strong Fortifications against the way of Salvation, the way of Faith, or going to Jesus Christ, for all, as poor and undone Sinners. These Enemies, in Hypocritical and Self-righteous Persons, stand armed in the Breaches of Nature, (as one observes) to beat off all Assaults of the Gospel, and therefore the latter State of these Persons is worse than the first.

3. A self
confident
Spirit.

Thirdly; *Self-confidence* may be another evil Spirit that is entred into these Persons, and which renders their State so bad. 'Tis impossible to perswade them that their Condition is naught and damnable: You may (as I hinted before) quickly bring a vile and debauched Person to acknowledge his State is dangerous, tho' there is no turning him from his evil course; yet he stands not upon self-justification, but rather readily yields to you; if you deal with him at a seasonable time with Wisdom, and tell him he is a very wretched Creature: I know I am so, saith he, the Lord have Mercy upon me. But the Man out of whom the debauched Devil is gone, is in his own Eyes become another Person, a seeming Saint, one that hears Sermons, Prays, and gives Alms, and yet not renewed, nor his evil Habits changed. O 'tis no easie thing to bring him once to doubt or question the Goodness of his Condition, he blesses God for that help he has had to change his former course of Life; *God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men, nor as this Publican*; I was as bad as others, but I am become religious; now I am no Swearer, Whoremonger, Drunkard, Extortioner, &c. To this purpose you have the *Pharisee* boasting and praising of God; this renders his state lamentable with a witness. What made the foolish Virgins so bold as to go forth to meet the Bridegroom? Was it not that confidence they had that their condition was good? *A wise Man, saith Solomon, feareth, and departeth from iniquity; but a Fool rageth, and is confident.*

Prov. 14.
16.

4. A vain-
glorious
Spirit.

Fourthly; *Vain-Glory* also certainly may be another Sin this Person is become guilty of. The Design of God in the Gospel, is to discover how vile, helpless, and wretched all Men naturally are in themselves, and so to shew us that we have nothing to glory in, *but that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord.* But these Persons glory in their seeming Gifts, Parts, Learning, Knowledge, and external Priviledges: They are like those of old who cried out, *the Temple*

1 Cor. 1.
31.

of the Lord, or the Church of God are we. Poor Sinners have nothing to glory in unless it be their Shame. The *Publican* cries out, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.* But the false and self-righteous Professor, like as a rich Man glories in his Riches, and a strong Man glories in his Strength, so he glories in his own Righteousness, in his spiritual Attainments and seeming Sanctity.

This vain-glorious Person little considereth what horrid Pollution abides still in his Heart, for which he is accursed by the Law of God, and so remains till he hath real Union with Christ, and is brought under a Divine Change. What though he has escaped some abominable Evils and Corruptions of his Life, since his vicious Habits, and filthy Nature is not changed, nor he sees not the Purity of the Law of God? Alas, he beholds it, as only forbidding all outward Acts of Sin, but the Spirituality of it was never opened to him, for if it had, he would see no cause of glorying in himself, but contrariwise would soon be convinced of his Error and sad Mistake, and behold himself an undone Man, and cry out of the deceitful Nature, turnings and windings of his own base Heart, Thoughts and Affections, and that great disproportion or disagreement to the perfect Rule, or how far he is from that Holiness, and Rectitude described in the Book of God. It amazed *Paul*, when he once came fully to understand the Law, when he looked on all the parts of it, not only on the grosser Sins forbidden by it, but on the Rectitude, the Holiness which is required therein: When he saw the Law discovered Lust to be Sin, and that the least Lust of the Heart is as palpable a breach of it, as Murder, Theft, or the outward Act of Adultery, and exposed equally to the Curse of it, and so to the Wrath of God: Then (saith he) *Sin revived, and I died*; that is, as to any hopes of Life and Salvation by that Righteousness which before he gloried in, and made his boast of.

Fifthly; Moreover, *Formality*, it may appear to all, from hence is another Evil ty. *that does attend this sort of Men, or is another wicked Spirit that hath possession of their Souls.* What a stir did the *Pharisees* make about Ceremonies? how zealous were they, like some now adays for outward Rituals and Traditions of their own devising, or which are mere humane? as if the chief part of Religion, and the sacred Worship of God, consisted in external Forms, Rites, and Ceremonies; *And art confident* (saith the Apostle) *that thou thyself art a Guide of the Blind, a Light to them who are in Darknes, an Instructor of the foolish, a Teacher*

5. A Spirit
of formali-
ty.

Rom. 2.
19, 20.

Teacher of Babes, which haſt a form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law.

Annotators A Scheme or System of Notions, a compendious Model or Method which is artificially compoſed, ſuch as Tutors and Profeſſors of Arts and Sciences do read over again and again to their Pupils and Auditors: Theſe Men are commonly the chief Enemies to the Power of Religion and Godlineſs, and like their Brethren of old, great Perſecutors of God's faithful and ſincere Children, whiſt they cry up their external Forms, conſidering not what our Saviour ſaith, that *God is a Spirit*, and ſeeks ſpiritual Worſhippers of him, not formal, not external, or carnal Modes, bodily Geſtures, conſecrated Places, attended with glorious Ceremonies, ſaying over a few Prayers, in which are many vain Repetitions, not minding whether their matter of Worſhip be of Divine Inſtitution or not, nor whether they perform their Devotion in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, flowing from a rectified Nature, and from ſacred Principles in the Life and Power that attends all ſanctified Chriſtian Worſhippers. Others of the ſame ſort may be right in the matter of Worſhip, ſeeming to hate Idolatry and all Superſtition, yet wholly reſting on the external part of Religion and Godlineſs, whoſe ſtate may be as dangerous as thoſe before named; though in this they ſeem to excel them, *i. e.* the firſt miſs it both in the matter of Divine Worſhip, as well as in the manner of it, they are zealous for the Traditions and Commandments of Men; as they are formal in their Worſhip, ſo their Form is not that Form of Doctrine once delivered to the Saints; 'tis not the true form of Godlineſs, having [*a form*] of Godlineſs, not [*the form*] 'tis like a Mask or Viſard, or Appearance, an accidental form (as one obſerves on that place) 'tis a deviſed, or an humane, nay may be an Antichriſtian Form, thinking themſelves to be Chriſtians, and the only Worſhippers of Chriſt, and cry up themſelves to be the Church, the Church, and yet under this Viſard and pretended piety are very vicious, empty and vain; denying the Power of Godlineſs.

6. A legal Spirit.

Sixthly; The wicked Spirit, or abominable Sin that ſome of theſe Mens Souls are alſo poſſeſſed with, is Legality. And though this clearly appears by what I have already ſaid, yet I ſhall ſpeak a little more fully and diſtinctly unto it. All that theſe Perſons do and perform, is in a legal Spirit; and that I may ſhew you what I mean by Legality, in ſhort it is this, *i. e.* They act and do for Life, look upon themſelves to be under a conditional Covenant; and whiſt they live up to that Law or Rule which they

judge they are bound to obſerve and keep, in order to Juſtification, they have Peace, rendring the Goſpel and Covenant of Grace (by their falſe apprehenſions of it) no better than a legal Miniſtration or conditional Covenant, as was hinted before in reſpect of another ſort of Men: For like as the Jews of old acted in a legal Spirit, and fought to be juſtified by the Works of the Law, ſo theſe perform all their Services and Duties in the ſame Spirit, *viz.* not from Life, or a Divine Principle of Saving-Faith, but for Life. To keep the Commandments of God, and live religiously, is abſolutely neceſſary. But then this muſt be done from a renewed Nature, and flow from Faith, it being the proper Effect or Fruit thereof; but to ſtrive to live a ſober and holy Life, and obey God's Precepts, and reſt upon their ſo doing, and look to be accepted with God, and juſtified thereby, is that which too many of this ſort of People do, and this is to act in a legal Spirit. Poſſibly a Man may ſay, I know I cannot perfectly keep the Law, but I will do (by the help of God) what I can; and wherein I through weakneſs do tranſgreſs, the Lord is merciful, and I truſt will forgive me. But let them remember what God ſaith, *viz.* That he will in no wiſe clear the Guilty. Moreover, what the Law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the Law, that all Mouths may be ſtopped, and the whole World become guilty before God. 'Tis evident, as God will not forgive an impenitent Perſon, ſo he will not forgive the Penitent, except they believe in Jeſus Chriſt.

Rom. 2.19.

Seventhly; Amongſt the wicked Spirits that are entred into this Man, namely, into this Counterfeit Chriſtian, that horrid and wicked Spirit of Unbelief muſt not be left out, for tho' this Sin of Sins is in all unconverted Perſons, yet it reigns and triumphs more in this ſort of People than in others. Prophane Perſons are kept up by a falſe Faith, depending, as they will tell you, on the Death and Merits of Chriſt, tho' 'tis only curſed preſumption in them; for that cannot be a true Faith, which changes not the Heart and Life of the Creature. But they believe not, by reaſon of love to their Sins, which they are not as yet willing to forgo. But theſe believe not on Chriſt, becauſe of that love which they have to their own ſeeming Righteouſneſs, which in point of Truſt, Hope, and Dependance, they are not willing to forgo. Theſe Men place that Hope on their own Works and Righteouſneſs, which true Chriſtians place on Chriſt, and ſo unbelief in them throws Chriſt quite away, they having no need of him.

7. An unbelieving Spirit.

1. What

1. What is Unbelief, but an actual or vertual Denial of the Truth of the Gospel, when Men do not assent to the Doctrine of it, by an act of the Understanding?

2. 'Tis a refusal to accept heartily of Christ upon the Terms of the Gospel, which is opposite to Justifying-Faith, when there is not a fiducial Motion to Christ as the Center. When Christ the only Foundation and chief Corner-Stone, is laid aside, and the Need and Worth of him not believed. This Sin binds all the Guilt of all their old and new Sins upon their Souls, 'tis a Sin against the highest Goodness of God, and casts Contempt upon it; for never did God manifest such sovereign Goodness unto his Creatures, as in Jesus Christ.

Acts. 4. 12.

God hath said, there is no Life, no Salvation any other way, but by the Lord Jesus. But these Men do not assent to this Truth, do not believe the Report God hath given concerning the want of perfect Righteousness and Regeneration, and Self-debasement, &c. Nay, they seem to contradict the Will of God, by their going about to establish their own Righteousness, and so not submitting to the Righteousness of God. In a word, 'tis a denying of Christ, and a disesteeming the Price of his Blood, as it also reflects on the Wisdom of God, in fixing on this way to save Sinners: 'Tis an invaluable the Excellency of Christ's Person, Blood and Merits. As Faith counts all things Dung in Comparison of Christ; so Unbelief accounts the Person, Offices, and Doctrine of Christ, but as

Rom. 10. 3.

Dung in Comparison of the Excellency of Self-Righteousness, Self-Wisdom, Self-Sufficiency, &c. These Men are the worst Neglecters of the great Salvation, they do not only neglect it, but slight and condemn it, there being in their Thoughts not any need to look for Salvation this way: They that sin against the Law, fly to the Gospel; but these sin against the Cure held forth and extended in the Gospel. Whither must these fly since there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin? If this be slighted, no other way or means is ordained for Salvation. Such who refuse the Covenant of Grace, and depend on the Covenant of Works, how woful is their Condition? And what hope a Law often Transgressed can give a Malefactor, is (saith a worthy Person) easie to imagine: Millions have perished by it, none can be secured by it, as none ever by it were or could be saved. At first these Persons Transgressed against the Rule, but now they Transgress against the Rule and Remedy too. None but Unbelievers are despised by God, none but these shall taste of his Wrath and Divine Vengeance; this is the condemning Sin, this

is Satan's strongest hold, hither he Retreats after all, and here he keeps, as in Chains his miserable Captive. *He that believes not, shall be damned.* And what is Faith but a going out of a Mans self to Christ for Life and Righteousness, as a poor wretched and miserable Sinner? But these Men now see not themselves to be in such a State, these are Hypocrites.

Mark 16. 16.

Hypocrisie is opposed to that inward simplicity of the Heart, and all counterfeit Professors are guilty of it, though all do not act the part of an Hipocrite with an Intention, *i. e.* are not convinced, they are Hipocrites: Some deceive their own Hearts, they are the grosser sort; the their Hearts deceive them, therefore most to be pitied; a Man may may doubtless be an Hipocrite, and he may not know it, he may go on in a way of Duty, and do all things, as he thinks, exactly according to the Letter of the Word, and in Uprightness as he may judge, and yet be unsound; certainly thus it was with the foolish Virgins.

Mat. 25.

Hypocrites may be nevertheless discerned; our Saviour hath given the Character of them.

Character of an hypocrite.

1. They are commonly most zealous from the lesser things of Religion, *i. e.* for paying Tithes of Mint, Anise, and Cumin, but neglect the weightier things of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, Faith, and the Love of God: They strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel. They make a stir about External Rights, Observation of Days and Meats, but to the Power of Religion and Godliness are Strangers, and experience nothing of a Divine change on their Souls.

Mat. 23.

23, 24.

Luke 11.

42.

2. As they lay the greatest stress upon the least things, so they are commonly partial in their pretended Obedience; they lay hard things, or heavy Burdens upon others, but they themselves will not touch them with one of their Fingers: What they Preach and Press on others, they do not themselves, they will not obey Christ, nor follow him in the hardest things, nor do they obey in Love.

Mat. 23. 4.

3. They are commonly finding Faults in other Men, can spy the Mote in their Brother's Eye, but cannot see the Beam that is in their own. As it is a Sign of notorious Hypocrisie, and Impudence, to censure and judge others for those Sins which men live in themselves so it is a Sign of the like Hypocrisie, to spy Faults in others, and reproach them for those Faults, and yet the Person is guilty of worse himself. What they Preach and Press on others, they do not themselves; they will not follow Christ in the most hard and difficult things of Religion, but pick and chuse; will do some things that they like of, and not

Mat. 7. 3.

only

Charnock.

Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10.

only neglect others, but quarrel with them who contend for it, and faithfully subject to Christ in it. And as they are not Universal in their Obedience, so they do not obey in Love, nor do they obey always as sincere Christians do, as *David* intimateth.

4. They are generally very confident touching the Goodness of their own Condition, not questioning their Salvation, thus were the Pharisees, they judged others were in a damnable State, but as touching themselves, did not doubt but they were the only People; and blessed God they were not as other Men: whereas a true Christian is full of Fears, & Doubts about the Truth of Grace received, and Goodness of his Condition.

John 12.
43.

5. They are vain glorious, do what they do to be seen of Men; like the Pharisees, *They love the Praise of Men, more than the Praise of God*: their hopes are kept up by the good Opinion others have of them; they, like their Predecessors, *love greetings in the Markets, and uppermost Rooms in Feasts, and to be called of Men Rabbi*: they also are subject to Envy, or have their Hearts rise against such, who they hear out-do them; and would be looked upon as the chiefest of Men, in Learning, Parts and Wisdom.

Mat. 23.
6, 7.

6. They are commonly very zealous to make Men Profelytes to their own Notions of Religion, though may be false and corrupt Notions: But if they can but bring a Person to receive their Principles and External Ordinances, then they glory, tho' hereby he is made twofold (perhaps sevenfold) more the Child of Hell than before; the poor deceived Wretch thinking this change of Religion is a true Conversion, and so never looks out for any other, but speaking Peace to his own Soul, judging all is well within. They doubt not but they have Religion enough when it doth commend them to Men, and are taken for Saints by Saints; their greatest Labor is to keep up their Name and Credit in Religion; so that they may pass unsuspected amongst their Fellow Creatures, or have the Approbation of Men, and if none can charge them justly with any immoral Actions, they rest satisfied; whereas the greatest Care of a true Child of God is so to Walk and Labour, that he may be accepted of God, and have his Approbation.

Mat. 23. 15.

7. Self is commonly in the bottom. In all they do, they aim not at the Glory of God, but have a Carnal Design, Self-Advantage, or Self-Appause, &c. This moves and quickens them, and animates them in all they perform in Religious Services; and if they miss of their end, be it what it will, they soon are weary, and grow cold and flat in their

Spirits, and become Quarrelsome, and seek Offences, and disturb the Peace of the Church to whom they belong.

8. Moreover, they are not the same at Home, which they are Abroad, not in Private, what they seem to be in Publick; may be seldom Pray, either in their Family, or Closet; or if they do, 'tis with little Zeal, Enlargedness, or Affection to God.

APPLICATION.

This may inform us of the Cause and Reason there is so great Reproach brought upon Religion, and on the Ways of God, and on the People of God, by some who profess the Gospel. Alas, many of them who are called Saints, who we may fear are but counterfeit Christians, such who never experienced a true Work of Grace; they may have knowing Heads, but unsanctified Hearts. And from hence it is there are so many proud Persons in many Congregations, who with brazen Fore-heads will brave it out, with impudent Faces, in the presence of Christ's faithful Ministers; and though reprov'd, and told of their cursed Pride and abominable Dresses, high and shameful Towers, hateful to God and good Men, yet reform not, will not deny themselves of their filthy Lusts, though the Name of God and Religion is exposed to great Reproach and Contempt thereby, and the Hearts of sincere Christians wounded, and mourn for it bitterly before the Lord. If they had but a spark of true Grace, could they ever stand it out thus against the Gun-shot of Heaven? How fearless do they seem! under the rattling Peals of the Thunder of Heaven? They regard not the whetted Sword of the Almighty, nor the bending of his dreadful Bow; nor mind the Arrows that are just upon the String, God being ready to send forth his Anger with Fury, and his Rebukes in Flames of Fire.

Moreover, from hence it is also there are so many Covetous, Earthly and Hard-hearted Professors and Members in Churches. Alas, you may tell them of this abominable Sin a thousand times over, and all to no purpose, their Hearts ('tis to be feared) are set upon their Covetousness, they love the World more than the Word, nay, more than God or Jesus Christ; and yet, under a Cloak of Religion, ~~they~~ ^{they} shelter themselves as if all was well, and they good Christians: And because they covet no Man's Goods but their own, and so are not guilty of Theft, they conclude they are not chargeable with this Sin of Covetousness; though Christ's poor Members are not Regarded; the Naked are not Clothed, nor the Hungry Fed, nor

Informat. 2.

Mat. 25.

nor the Sick Visited. They will give something 'tis true, but not according to the Need and Necessity of the Poor, nor according to their Ability: Nor is it out of Love to Christ, nor to his poor Saints neither, they give what they do give, but may be to free themselves from Reproach, or to quiet their own Consciences. And hence it is likewise there are so many Whisperers, Tatlers and Backbiters in Congregations, and so consequently so much Trouble and Disorder in our Churches. Though Godly Christians may be guilty of great Disorders and many Infirmities, yet I am persuaded, were there not many false and Deceitful, Carnal and Hypocritical Professors, it would never be as it is. What makes the best Design that ever was among us, for the promoting the Interest of Christ, and good of the Churches, so neglected, and like to sink in the Bud, but the great discouragement these sort of People lay it under? They have no mind to such a good and great Work, they are for enriching themselves, and to lay into their own Coffers and Treasuries, but not to cast into Christ's Treasury. And this evil Example of theirs, lays a Temptation on sincere and upright Men and Women. What do such and such do? they are far richer than I, and they will do nothing. To these let me speak one word: Why, will you do no more for God, because some who love him not will do nothing? Alas, you had need do the more: I am persuaded you would not willingly be found foolish Virgins in the Day of Christ. How do you know but these very Men shall be found to be such, who value the gratifying of a base Lust, above the discharging a holy and acceptable Duty to Christ? who give more to Deck and Adorn their Houses, and please their Lust of their Children, than they will give to promote the Gospel, and recover the languishing Interest of Jesus Christ that is in our Hands. And may not this be the reason our Assemblies are so thin on Lecture-days? is it not because the Hearts of People are not right with God? Can godly Christians be always under the same Temptation? Can Sin predominate in them, and they act thus habitually to the scandal of their sacred Religion? Can Sin be in the Affections of Saints, because there are some Infirmities in their Conversations? Is not a true Child of God quickly convinced of his Fault? and doth he not straitway reform? But this is a constant course of evil, and willfully persisting in it; nay, and ye shall incur their displeasure perhaps if you deal plainly with them. Sure Christ is at the Door. Now the King-

dom of Heaven may certainly be compared to Ten Virgins, five wise, and as many foolish: Read the latter end of *Mat. 24.* and the beginning of the *25th* Chapter. Multitudes of Foolish Virgins, 'tis to be feared, are now got into the Church, as Christ signifies it would be a little before his Coming, whose latter end will be worse than the first.

This also reproves those who foment *Reproof. 1.* such Notions, and strive to distil them into the Minds of People that are absurd, and tend to blind and ruin Mens Souls, telling them they are in the Covenant of Grace, and Church-Members, by their Parents Faith, and have the Seal of the Covenant; yet I could never learn what it doth Seal or make firm to them. For a Seal, all know, usually makes sure all that is contained in the said Covenant. Shall they miss of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, who have it sealed to them? Alas, hereby 'tis to be feared, many think they are in a good Condition, though never united by saving Faith to Jesus Christ. Can it seal, and not seal Covenant-Mercies to them? Or can they perish after they are in the Covenant, and have the Seal of it? Circumcision was a Seal, *It is true, of that Faith Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised; it was not a Seal of that Faith which he had not, but of the Faith which he had; and therefore it could not be a Seal to his Male-Infants of the Righteousness of their Faith which they had, being yet Uncircumcised, because they had no such Faith before Circumcision, as to believe in God, and to have it imputed to them for Righteousness, as had Abraham their Father, to whom Circumcision was only called a Seal of the Righteousness of the Faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, and that he might be the Father of all them that believe.* It was a Seal to him of the latter Blessing as well as the former; for the Promise that he should be the *Heir of the World*, the Apostle shews was not through the Law, nor in or through Circumcision, nor had any that Dignity conferred upon them but Abraham only, which clearly shews Circumcision did not appertain to the Covenant of Faith.

Rom. 4.
11, 12.

Verf. 13.

Likewise it may reprehend another *Reproof. 2.* sort, who tell the People, they were made the Children of God, Members of Christ, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, in their Baptism, or rather Rantism. O the danger of this pernicious Doctrine! How many flatter themselves with the Hopes of Heaven from this false Foundation, thinking they sucked in the true Faith, and true Religion, with their Mother's Milk, and

were made Christians by a Priests scattering a little Water on their Faces when Babes, though they live in all manner of horrid Sins, and are Enemies to the Life and Power of Godliness? This is a way of making Christians which Christ and his Apostles never taught; and it is a *Healing of the Hurt of the People slightly*, taking them off from seeking after Grace and true Regeneration; for if they were made true Christians then, Regenerated then, doubtless their State is good; and so 'tis to be feared, thousands of them conclude, and never doubt of their Salvation.

Reproof 3.

Moreover, it reproves all who rest on Morality; who, because they live a Sober Life, and pay every Man his own, doing Justly, &c. conclude all is well, yet look after no other Religion. And it also as much reprehends those who boast of their Knowledge and Spiritual Attainments, they conclude their State is good, because they are Members of a true Church, and have been Baptized indeed, and break Bread, Read and Pray in their Families, and discharge all other External Duties of Religion, but rest wholly upon these things, and never were brought to be poor in Spirit, nor obtain real Union with Christ, but are ignorant of the Faith, of the Operation of God. What means the Pride of some? their Earthliness, Contention, Whispering, Backbiting, want of Love, Divisions, &c. shutting their Eyes at further Light, and Discovery of Truth? O look about you for the Lord's sake, lest after all your high Profession and Hopes of Heaven, you do not at last drop down to Hell.

Reproof 4.
Doth God allow of nothing for Ornament? We say all immodest and fantastical Garbs and Dresses are loathsome and to be abominated.

Lastly, It reproves all such Nice and Scrupulous Persons, who seem to make it their chief Business to render all odious who are not of their own fantastical Humor; Women must not wear a bit of Lace, &c. nor a Gold Ring, nor Men wear a Periwig, though never so short and modest, (and advised to do it by able Physicians, for their Health-sake) because the Apostle saith, *'Tis a shame for a Man to wear long Hair*; therefore they run into Extrems, and cut their Hair close to their Ears, and so disguise themselves, and censure others as guilty of great Abomination, (who will not imitate them) as if the main Points of Religion lay in these foolish Formalities and Niceties, and as if none were to be taken for Godly Christians, but such who are just of their Height, and Length, and Breadth, and conform to them in these smaller things (that may be lawful notwithstanding what such say;) and render those odious, who are better than themselves, even as such,

who hate Instruction, and cast God's Word behind them, &c. These Men seem to bear the exact Image of the Pharisees of old! and though they thus strain at a Gnat, yet at the same time seem to swallow a Camel. For one of this sort will be found, it is to be feared, guilty of horrid Lies and Slanders, Back-biting and Reproaching his Neighbours, seeming to be filled with Malice and Envy, rendring a great Body or Multitude of godly Christians, odious whom Christ Loves. I am perswaded it would be better with the Churches, if many were severed from them. But O how seldom have any been dealt with, either for Pride or Covetousness! as if we were not possible to find out such Offenders as well as others.

Moreover, it sharply reproves those Preachers whose great Business 'tis to bring Men into a visible Profession, and make them Members of Churches, whose Preaching tends more to bring Persons to Baptism, and to subject to external Ordinances, than to shew them the necessity of Regeneration, Faith, or a changed Heart. For the Lord's sake take heed what you do, if you would be pure from the Blood of all Men. We too often see when People are got into Churches, they conclude all is well; and when Conversion is preached, they do not think it concerns them, but others who are openly Prophane; and thus they come to be blinded, may be to their own Destruction; and if their Blood do not lie at some of your Doors, it will be well. I am afraid some now adays like the Pharisees, may be said to compass Sea and Land to make Profelytes, but when made, they are twofold more the Children of Hell than before, as our Saviour intimates.

It may also put us all upon a strict Examination of our own Hearts, lest we should be found some of these false and counterfeit Christians. And that we may clear our selves in this matter; Consider,

1. Were you ever thoroughly convinced of your sinful and lost Condition by Nature, and of that horrid Evil there is in Sin? Did you ever see Sin as the greatest Evil most hateful to God, not only of the evil Effects of Sin, but also of the evil Nature of Sin, not only as it has made a Breach between God and Man, but has it also defaced the Image of God in Man, and made us like the Devil, filling our Minds with Enmity against God, Godliness, and good Men.

2. Is there no secret Sin lived in and favoured, the evil Habit never being broke? Is not the World more in your Affections, Desires, and Thoughts, than Jesus Christ?

3. Are

Rom. 8.7.

Examinat.

Sincerity described.

3. Are you willing to suffer and part with all that you have, rather than Sin against God? Do you see more evil in the least Sin, than in the greatest suffering?

4. Do you as much desire to have your Sins mortified as pardoned, if so, it appears you are sincere, and no Hypocrite; and thus I close with this Parable.

The Parable of the Barren Fig-Tree opened.

SERMON VIII.

LUKE 13. 6, 7, 8, 9.

He speaks also this Parable, a certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none. Ver. 6.

Then said he unto the Dresser of the Vineyard, behold, these Three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground? Ver. 7.

And he answered, and said unto him, Lord let it alone this Year also, till I shall Dig about it and Dung it, Ver. 8.

And if it bear Fruit well, and if not thou shalt cut it down. Ver. 9.

IN speaking unto this Parable I shall in my usual Method,

1. Open the scope of it.
2. Explain the Terms.
3. Observe several points of Doctrine, and prosecute them distinctly, as the Lord may assist me.
4. Apply the whole.

The scope of the Parable opened.

1. In the first Verse of this Chapter, our Saviour takes notice of Herod's cruelty.

2. He also mentioneth that fearful Judgment which befell Eighteen Men, on whom the Tower in Siloam fell and slew them.

3. And from hence he exhorteth

them all to Repentance, shewing that they might not be greater Sinners than others who suffered such things; and tho' perhaps it might be their Sins that brought those Judgments upon them; yet if those to whom he Preached, did not believe in him and repent, he shews that they must expect far worse punishment, even eternal Wrath and Vengeance to be poured forth upon them; think you (as if our Lord should say) that your state is good, because ye are Abraham's Seed, and enjoy many external Church priviledges, and are spared, and God doth not execute present Judgments upon you, no, no, this will do you no good, since you are a Company of Barren, and unprofitable Persons; tho' you are planted in the Jewish Church (which was then the Vineyard of God) and trust that you are righteous, and the only happy People, yet are you likely to perish eternally for all this; and now to convince them of their great Danger in this respect, he brings in this Parable.

A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, &c.

1. From the Scope of the Parable thus opened, we may Note,

Doct. 1. *That temporal Judgments inflicted on some Persons, should excite others to fear God's Divine Wrath and Vengeance.* Alas, some are ready to cry out, O what Wrath, what Judgments are fallen upon such and such Persons! and thus bewail their Condition, when perhaps, tho' they suffered on Earth, yet might be happy for ever; and at the same time these very Persons (who seem affected with the state of those who suffered Temporal Judgments) are in a far worse Condition as to their eternal state; for evident it is, that many gracious Persons have born and endured most severe punishment on Earth, as

some that suffer great punishments here, may be eternally happy.

the

the blessed Martyrs who are now glorified in Heaven: And many others also have born bitter things here, tho' not by Martyrdom, as *Holy Job, &c.*

As a Tryal of their Faith, and
other Graces; and some for their Sins,
&c.

Doct. 2. *No Persons ought to be rash to censure others on whom Temporal Judgments befall: There is no knowing either love or hatred by any thing that is under the Sun.*

Dost thou hear of any Judgment fallen on such, or such a Man; Tremble, for thou knowest not but in a short time, as bad, or worse may befall thee; every Judgment which falls upon any Person, calleth aloud upon all Sinners to repent, lest they also perish; and that not only on Earth, but also in Hell for ever; thou art a Sinner, and perhaps a greater Sinner than such who were taken away by sudden Death, or in an unusual manner with a fearful Stroak; and God is angry with thee as well as with them, and may make thee an Example of his Wrath and Judgment, as he hath others; if not, yet be not rash to judge them, nor be thou an Idle, or careless Spectator of the Theatre of God's Judgments. So much as to the Scope of this Parable.

Secondly, we shall proceed to explain and open the Parts and Terms contained in it.

1. *A certain Man*, by this certain Man is meant, or intended the great God; God is sometimes called *a certain King*, also sometimes a Man, yea, an Husbandman; *my Father is an Husbandman*; *my Father is an Husbandman*; *man*: Though God be a Spirit Immense, Infinite, of and from himself, and incomprehensible, yet he is sometimes compared to a Man that hath a Vineyard, *that had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard.*

A Vineyard, by Vineyard is here meant the Church of God; and wherefore the Church is compared to a Vineyard, we have in opening other Parables shewed; but yet take a few things upon this account here.

1. A Vineyard is a select, or choice piece of Ground taken out of other common Ground, designed by the owner for some special Use.

Even so God hath taken his Church out of the Field of this World, or from the rest of Mankind, who lie Barren, like the waste Wilderness, for some special and peculiar use and design.

2. A Vineyard is Walled, or Fenced
Isa. 5. 1. 2. in, so is God's Vineyard, *he made a Wall*

about it. The Church of God is a Gar- Cant. 4. 12.
de enclosed, and not only the Church in
general, but every Member thereof par-
ticularly is Walled in. Hast thou not Job. 1. 10.
made a Hedge about him, and about all
that he hath on every side : The Church
(and every particular Believer) hath
many Enemies, and are in the midst of
Dangers, why else need there be a Hedge
or Wall about them; alas, none in the
World are more envied and spighted,
and exposed to Danger than God's people
are by Satan, and wicked Men, there-
fore God Walls or Hedges them in on
every side. And

1. God himself more immediately Protecteth them, or is a Guard to them by his special Providence, by his Power, Wisdom, Love, Care and Faithfulness.

2. He employs his Holy Angels to Protect and Preserve his Church, and all that dwell therein; *the Angels of the Lord Encamp round about them that fear him.* What a glorious Guard had the Prophet *Elias* round about him, when in great Danger : Angels are compared to Fire, and they are as a Wall of Fire round about God's People. Psal. 34. 7.

3. By a Wall the Church like a Vineyard is severed or separated from the World; the Constitution and Discipline of the Church, makes it distinct from the rest of Mankind; many confound the Church with the World; but what saith our Saviour, *ye are not of the World*, Joh. 15. *but I have chosen you out of the World*; 19. they are Commanded to Separate themselves, in respect of Church-State Worship, and Discipline from the World, *come out from amongst them, and be Separated saith the Lord, and touch not thy unclean thing, and I will receive you*, &c. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18; again he saith, *be not conformable to this World*; that is in point of Worship, and in humane Traditions, or in Fantastical Fashions, and evil Customs. Rom. 12.2.

4. A Man greatly delighteth in his Vineyard which he hath Walled in, Manured, and Sowed with precious Seeds, and planted with precious Plants, as *Vines, Fig-trees, &c.* So the Lord greatly delighteth in his Church, which he hath made a peculiar People to himself, and sown with holy right Seed, and planted with Trees of Righteousness: *Thou shalt be called Hepzibah, and the Land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee.* The Church he calls his Portion, *Israel is the Lot of his Inheritance,* therefore cannot but take great delight in them; and from hence he is said to dwell ^{2 Cor. 6.} in them, and walk in them, as a Man ^{18.} walks up and down in his Vineyard, being pleased therewith.

A Vineyard of a Noble Person he esteems as his choicest Possession: Kings have

have had their Vineyards, we read of Solomon's Vineyard (and how Ahab was in love with Naboth's Vineyard) and so hath the King of Heaven and Earth, and it is his own, he bought it with a great price, and therefore highly values it.

5. A Man bestows great pains upon his Vineyard, he Plants it, Dungs it, Waters it and Weeds it, and thinks nothing too much to lay out upon it to make it Fruitful. Now the Holy God in respect of Cost and Pains that he has laid out, and been at with his Vineyard, far exceeds all that ever had a Vineyard; no Vineyard was ever Purchased so Dear, nor Planted with such choise and precious Plants; it was bought with the price of Blood, the Blood of his own Son, his only begotten Son, and Sown with the Graces of his own Holy Spirit; so that God may well say, *what could I do more for my Vineyard which I have not done.*

6. He that hath an excellent Vineyard, appoints one to be his Vine-dresser to Prune it and Purge it, and to cut off Superfluous Branches.

Now God hath chosen, and appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to be his Vine-dresser as Chief, and under him his faithful Ministers, whom he employs to labour in his Vineyard.

Had a Fig-tree Planted in his Vineyard, not onely one, but many; yet one, and many of that Sort; it may be feared that are Barren or Fruitless. By this Fig-tree is meant all barren and fruitless Persons, (who sit under the means of the Gospel,) especially such who are Members of the visible Church; this Fig-tree I say signifies all Barren and meer formal Professors of Religion.

A Fig-Tree Planted &c.

Quest. But why doth Jesus Christ compare Professors of Religion to Fig-Trees.

Ans. I. He may allude to the Practice of such who had Vineyards in the Land of Canaan, in which they frequently Planted, not only Vines, but Fig-trees also.

II. It may be because a Fig-tree that brings forth ripe and good Figs, requires much Heat of the Sun, or must grow in a Hot Climate.

So Professors of Cristianity cannot thrive as to bring forth ripe & good Fruit, but under the Divine and warm Influences of the Sun of Righteousness, and the blessed Gospel of God's Grace; as in our Cold Climate, no Fig-tree bears ripe Figs, so in those Regions where the Gospel is not Preached, and the Sun of Righteousness shines not, but being only under

the influences of natural Light, bring forth no spiritual and saving Fruit, no Gospel Fruit, nothing but the Fruit of Morality.

III. Because no Tree (as naturalists observe) is commonly more fruitful than the Fig-tree.

For the first Year they are Planted (as my Author notes) they commonly bear Fruit, they bring forth Fruit sooner than other Trees.

2. But if they bring not forth Fruit, the First, Second, nor the Third Year, it is observed there is but little hope or ground to expect they will ever be fruitful Trees.

Even so if Men are not changed, converted, or renewed, in the beginning of the Preaching of the Gospel, or when 'tis first Preached to them it is rare if they ever be, converted, or if not in the beginning of their Days (provided they are under the means of Grace) there is but little hope or ground to believe they ever will be converted; very few who have long sat under the powerful Preaching of the Gospel, if not converted, ever afterwards are converted; or if not in their Youth; 'tis rare if they are when they are old, tho' perhaps some may, but it is not usual, or a common, or ordinary thing: For them which God calls at the Third Hour, he doubtless seldom calls at the Eleventh Hour.

IV. A Fig-tree is a Tree full of Sap, and draws much moisture from the Root, and from the fatness of the Earth.

So true Christians are full of Divine Sap, or have much Grace in them, and also daily draw fresh vertue from Christ, and from his Word, and holy Ordinances; hence it is said, that the Trees of the Lord are full of Sap, they flourish like Trees planted by the Water side.

V. A Fig-tree bears choice Fruit, Figs are of a pleasant and feeding nature and also have most Sovereign qualities in them to assuage and break a hard and dangerous Swelling; it is said they are excellent good to break and heal a Plague Sore, and indeed this is confirmed by the Word of God, for when Hezekiah was Sick (as it is thought) of the Pestilence, he was healed of his Sore by Figs: For Isaiah had said, let them take a lump of Figs and lay it for a Plaster upon the Boil, and he shall recover. True, some would have this to be only a Sign of his Recovery, and not as if Figs had such a powerful vertue in them. But others upon good ground conclude, Figs have an excellent vertue in them for breaking a hard swelling, tho' a greater blessing might then attend that Plaster than usual.

Ask Physicians, and they will tell you of the quality of one sort of Figs.

L

Brethren,

Brethren, the Fruit which Believers bring forth, is most choise and precious Fruit in the sight of God. For

1. Faith, O! what an excellent Grace or Fruit of the Spirit is that, it is called *precious Faith*, to them that have obtained like *precious Faith* with us, &c. more precious than Gold, it is sweet to the Taste, nay it makes such things that are very bitter in themselves, to be very sweet and pleasant to the Soul; as bitter Afflictions, Trials, and Temptations.

2. This Fruit revives and comforts the fainting Spirits of a poor Christian. *I had fainted, unless I had believed, &c.*

3. Without Faith, we cannot Taste any sweetness in God, we cannot Taste how good the Lord is, nor how precious Jesus Christ is, for he is only precious to them that believe, *to you that believe he is precious*, not to others.

4. No Man can have any true peace in his own Soul, without he hath saving Faith in Christ; we must first have Grace, and then Peace.

5. No changed Heart, no true brokenness of Heart, no Cure for the Plague of a hard Heart, no cleansing the Leprous Soul, without Faith, *they shall look unto him whom they pierced, and shall mourn*, they shall look, &c. that is, they shall believe in Christ, and then mourn and grieve for Sin; all godly sorrow for Sin proceeds from Faith in Christ.

6. No Communion with Christ without Faith, there is not any fitness in unbelievers for that Divine fellowship; the Heart of Man naturally is full of enmity against God, and can see no cause of joy or rejoycing in him; such cannot savour the things of the Spirit, who believe not.

7. Faith is an earnest of Glory, and therefore it is a most excellent Fruit.

8. Such who bear this Fruit may know that God loved them from everlasting; it is one of Christ's Love Tokens, all that have saving Faith, have Jesus Christ, or an interest in him, and shall certainly be saved.

2ly. What excellent Fruit is love, love to God, love to Christ, and love to his People; as also humility, patience, temperance, this Fruit pleaseth Christ, Grace breaks the hard Heart, and a Heart puffed up, and swelled with Pride and vain Glory; Grace cures the Plague of Sin, the Plague of unbelief, and Earthly-mindedness.

V. Fig-trees bear Fruit all the Year, when some Figs are ripe, others are green, it is seldom but fruit may be found on some Fig-trees, so the Saints and People of God bear Fruit continually in the Summer of Prosperity, and in the Winter of Adversity they cease not bearing Fruit: *Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the*

Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: For he *is a like Tree Planted by the Waters, and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River, and shall not see when Heat cometh, but her Leaf shall be Green, and shall not be careful in Tears of Drought, neither shall cease from yielding Fruit.*

Again it is said, the Righteous shall flourish like the Palm Tree, he shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon, those that are planted in the House of the Lord shall flourish in the Courts of our God, they shall still bring forth Fruit in old Age, they shall be fat and flowerring.

VI. There are some Fig-trees Barren, they are not of the right kind, but seem a Bastard sort of Plants, which only have the name of Fig-trees; not the nature of fruitful Fig-trees.

So there are some Professors, who tho' they are planted in Christ's Vineyard, yet they are Barren or Fruitless Persons, they are not indeed true Christians, true Believers, but meer Counterfeits, Professors, that have the name of spiritual Fig-trees, but not the nature, never were made good Trees, and therefore never produce or bear good Fruit, but are like some Branches in a Vine, that bear no Fruit, for tho' these are grafted into Christ mystical, i. e. into his visible Church, and so are said to be in Christ, that is by a visible Profession, yet never had any internal union with Christ, nor ever received the Spirit, the bond of that Union, from whence Faith proceeds, for Faith properly is the Fruit of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit is infused, and Faith is produced, or springs up as the Flower from the Seed which is first sown.

Planted in his Vineyard, it is not said who planted this Fig-tree in Gods Vineyard, the Lord Christ planted it not, because it was utterly void of Fruit; the Trees of the Lord are full of Sap, and they do and shall flourish in his Vineyard, to shew that the Lord is upright, he is our Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. Note, Ministers may plant Trees in Christ's Vineyard, that God never planted there; they thro' Ignorance of Men's Hearts and states, or thro' carelessness, may take into the Church, such Persons that never were truly Converted, but these will not stand long there, every Plant my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be pluckt up.

2. Yet this word *Planted*, denotes that this Person was got into the Church and looked like a true spiritual Fig-tree, i. e. a true Believer, or like a Godly Christian, or was in shew and appearance a Saint; Ministers and Churches may be deceived, and Baptize and receive Hypocrites into the Church, a cursed Judas was once planted in God's Vineyard, and a Simon Magus was Baptized by Philip.

Fig-trees
bear fruit
all the Year.

Act. 3.

Some profess themselves to be what they are not, but deceive themselves and others. Satan is subtle, and he craftily teaches some Persons to counterfeit the true Christian.

And came and sought Fruit thereon.

God takes notice of the fruitfulness of every Saint.
1. God takes notice of every particular Person that is Planted in his Vineyard, there is not one Member of the Church but his all seeing Eye is continually upon.

Ila. 5.
Jude 12. Bunnyon.
2. God expecteth Fruit in such that are planted in his Church. *He looked it should bring forth Grapes*, not wild Grapes, not the fruit of the Flesh, but the fruits of the Spirit; not to see them lay the Reins. lose on the Neck of their Lusts, and inordinate Affections, not Pride, Ambition, Gluttony, Backbiting, Whispering, &c. not feeding themselves without fear, not the daubing themselves (as one observes) with the Lust, proving Fashions of the times, to walk with stretched out Necks, naked Breasts, frizzled foretops, wanton Gestures, gorgeous Apparel, mixed with Gold and Pearl, or deck'd with costly Array; not Earthly mindedness, Covetousness, Strife and Envy, but Love, Faith, Meekness, Humility, Temperance, Liberality, Brotherly kindness, Charity, and abhorring all iniquity, even avoiding all the appearance of evil, and discharging of all pious and holy duties.

Mat. 22. 11.
12.
3. If there be but one Soul, one Member in the Church that is fruitless, God will soon find that Person out; *he saw there a Man that had not on a Wedding Garment.*

Pro. 5. 21.
He came to see the Guests, he looks this way and that way; *all the ways of Men are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all their goings*; no Person can hide themselves from his sight.

Thou fruitless Fig-tree, thou barren Professor, dost thou hear this and not tremble? God is come seeking Fruit; will thy bare profession, thy knowledge of the principles of Religion, satisfy the great God? will the notions of truth in thy Head, thy talking and disputing? serve thy turn? thy hearing the Word, or this and that Minister Preach, and sit as a Judge to censure them, and catch at any mistake; or to commend their Sermons when they please thee; I say, is this all the fruit (think you) God looks for? God will have fruit, precious fruit from thee; 'tis this he comes to seek and find on thy Branches.

But found none, sad case! Harken O thou barren Soul, God says he found none; what none at all? I must tell thee, if thy fruit be not right fruit, God looks upon it to be no fruit; if it be not such

fruit that spiritual Fig-trees should bear, it is no fruit in his account.

'Tis not the fruit of good words only, but the fruit of good Works, not the fruit of Discouraging well, Talking well, but the fruit of walking well, having a holy and pious Conversation.

2. May be some hasty fruit thou didst bring forth, thou mightest have a fair and promising beginning, didst shew much zeal, and much love and affection for, and to Jesus Christ for a short time, but thy goodness was as the early Cloud, Hos. 6. 4. and as the morning Dew, it passed away; and at first thou seemest hot, but art soon cold.

3. There is a Fruit faith honest Bunnyan, among Professors that withers, and so never comes to be Ripe, a Fruit that is smitten in the growth, and comes not to maturity; and this is reckoned no Fruit, &c. some make a shew of a promising Crop, they Blossom well, but the Blossoms drop off, or it is blasted with the East Wind; I mean by Satan's temptations they decay, or a Worm breeds in their Blossom that eats out the Heart of the Flower and blossom of Profession i. e. some cursed Sin or another gets into their Hearts, and they presently wither, and die away.

4. There is the Fruit of common Grace and spiritual Gifts, the gift of Knowledge, the gift of Prayer, perhaps the gift of Prophecy, or Preaching; this fruit they may bring forth, but God accounts these no fruit.

5. Or perhaps there is in these the fruit of Morality, but not the fruit of Regeneration; something which looks like Grace, saving Grace, but it is no such thing; for this fruit is often found on wild Fig-trees, such that grow in the common Field of this World, many Heathens have brought forth such fruit as this, and many Persons who never were planted in God's Vineyard, do bring forth the fruit of good manners, i. e. they may be just and faithful in their Dealings or Tradings in the World, and not guilty of any gross acts of Immorality, but this God accounts as no Fruit; this is nothing but what the Ground may bring forth naturally, I mean no other fruit but what a meer natural Man by the help of the light of Nature, and by the power of natural Knowledge, and natural Conscience may produce, who never received a principle of saving Grace.

6. Or they may bring forth untimely fruit, fruit that falls off before the proper Season, as a Fig-tree casteth her untimely Figs, so these are like the stony Ground, they hear the Word with joy, Rev. 6. 13. Mat. 13. and anon, or before they are well rooted, 20, 21. their fruit falls off as soon as the Sun rises and shines hot, or as soon as Tribulation,

tion, and Reproaches, and persecution arises because of the Word, they are offended; moreover, perhaps others of this sort may delay bringing forth of fruit until the Season of Grace is over; some sow the Seed so late, that it never comes to perfection; so some repent too late, defer believing, and closeing with Christ, till the Summer is ended; and so their fruit is untimely fruit, the foolish Virgins went to buy Oyl when it was too late, before they were ready the Bridegroom came, and they and their fruit were rejected.

Mat. 25.
9, 10, 11.

Then he said to the Dresser of the Vineyard, these Three Years I come seeking fruit, but find none.

1. What
may be
meant by the
three Years
of God's
seeking fruit.

Some by these Three Years, understand the beginning of the promise made to Adam, and the Preaching under the Law, and the giving out of that Ministration.

2. The second Year, the Preaching of the Prophets.

3. The third Year, the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles, but this I think is far fetched, and not meant by these three Years.

Others by these three Years, understand the whole time of our blessed Saviour's Preaching and confirming his Doctrine by Miracles, which was about the space of three Years; but this also I shall pass by.

By three Years I understand is meant that Time God is pleased to afford to a People, or to a single Person; a certain time being here mentioned, to denote an uncertain.

1. The first Year may denote the beginning of the means of Grace which God affords to Men and Women.

2. Year the proper time that Fig-trees bear fruit, if not the first Year, then it is expected that it brings forth fruit the second Year.

3. Or it may Imply, that God expecteth Sinners should bring forth quickly, after they sit under the means of Grace.

4. Moreover it may denote that the means of Grace may not be of long continuance.

5. Also it may signifie God's patience, he waits one Year, two Years; nay, three Years, and yet find finds no fruit. Some Divines note that usually three Years after any Persons are under the means of Grace, they bring forth fruit, or else there is but little hopes of them.

Cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground.

God will not always bear with fruitless Professors, this cutting down may refer to several severe Acts of God's Justice.

1. God may direct his Speech to his Church, and to the subordinate Vine-dressers.

Cut it down, by Excommunication pass the righteous Censure of the Church against this Barren, Carnal, and unprofitable Professor, *deliver him up to Satan for the destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.*

2. Or God may speak unto Jesus Christ the grand Vine-dresser, smite his Root, let him wither, and his seeming fruit die away, even as our Lord smote the barren Fig-tree, and said, *never Fruit be on thee any more for ever.*

3. Give him up unto his own Hearts Lusts, leave him to himself, withdraw all motions of the Spirit, and convictions of Conscience, and let him perish for ever.

4. Leave him to delusions, God sends some strong Delusions, that they may be Damned, because they received not the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved.

This is a fearful way of Cutting down, O how many have in this Nation of loose and barren Professors been thus cut down, they having had no more than a bare profession of Religion, the meer Shell, have been left to cast contempt upon the blessed Ordinances of Jesus Christ, calling them low and carnal Ordinances, carnal Forms, and empty Shadows.

5. Or Christ may cut them down by Death, or cut them off in the midst of their Days. I should now proceed to the reason why the Lord Commands this unfruitful Tree to be cut down, *why cumbereth it the Ground*; this is the cause it is a Ground cumberer, but shall now close with a word of Use.

1. Let such who are planted in God's Vineyard, tremble who are not fruitful in Grace and Holiness, the Church will be no Sanctuary to such Persons.

2. We may infer from hence, that some Persons who are in Christ's Vineyard, were never planted therein by the hand of God, for such whom he planteth are fruitful Trees, Trees full of Fruit.

3. Men may have Leaves upon their Branches, nay some seeming fruit, and they may seem to grow and flourish for a time, and yet nevertheless may not bring forth the true and saving fruits of the Spirit.

4. We may also infer from hence that tho' Men may take some Professors to be sincere, whose Hearts are not right with God; yet long it will not be before God discovers them, and his wrath manifested against them. The barren Soul shall not stand long in God's Vineyard.

Sermon

S E R M O N V I I I .

L U K E 13. 6, 7, 8, 9.

He spake also a Parable, a certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, &c.

I Closed the last Day with these words, *Cut it down.* I shall now proceed to the reason which seems to be given why this barren Fig-tree is cut down, viz. *Why cumbereth it the Ground.*

1 Doct. *God is greatly offended or displeased with barren Professors, nay, with all unprofitable Persons, who under the means of Grace, cumber the Ground.*

2 Doct. *That the Evil and Danger of barrenness is very great.*

A little to the first of these, God is displeased because it is a Fig-tree, 'tis not a Bramble bush, but a Fig-tree, tho' not of the right kind, i. e. a Professor, but no true Believer; it is not a Thorn nor a Thistle, from such God looks for no such Fruit, he expecteth no spiritual fruit from profane Persons; *do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles.* What fruit can God look for from Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, carnal Worldlings, or the like, nothing can be expected from these and such as these are, but the Grapes of Sodom, or cursed and abominable Fruit.

2. God may be displeased because it is a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard; possibly a Fig-tree may be found in a Hedge, or to grow wild in a common Field, (as our Saviour saw a Fig-tree by the way he went) but this was planted in his Vineyard: There may be many professing Persons amongst the ungodly; in the Field of this World, I mean in the false Church, that may not be as yet transplanted into God's Vineyard, and perhaps such that may not be so barren of good fruit, as some Members of a true Church of Christ, where no barren Tree, or fruitless Professors ought to be, now God finding such a one in his Vineyard, he is greatly displeased.

3. Because they seem to frustrate his expectation (to speak after the manner of Men) *I looked that it should bring forth Grapes.* Doth not a Husbandman look that such Plants, such Trees which are planted in his Vineyard should be fruitful, on whom he bestowed much

pains; and is it not a great disappointment to him to see any barren or fruitless there?

4. God may be displeased because such barren Persons are a disparagement to his Vineyard, what, such a Fig-tree in the Kings Vineyard, he doth not use to plant the worse sort of Plants in his Vineyard, but most choise and precious Plants, such that are of the right Kind, and of great Worth and Value. That one Tree may not disparage another, nor the whole Vineyard, it being a Vineyard well Manured, Weeded, Watered, and Pruned; where also a Multitude of choice Trees are, that bring forth fruit plentifully.

5. Because it abuseth his Patience also, this may be another reason why God is offended, *these three Years I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, but find none.* I have long waited to see whether it would bring forth fruit or not, and I am now quite wearied out, I have exercised much patience and long suffering, towards this Man, and this Woman, but all is in vain.

6. To come to the main reason which seems here laid down, *why cumbereth it the Ground,* this denotes,

I. It is good for nothing, it yields no profit, so this barren Professor brings no Honour to God, no Credit to Religion, nor to the Church, but it is a shame and reproach to God, his Ministers, and Vineyard.

II. But this is not all meant hereby, *it cumbereth the Ground,* i. e. another good Tree, a good plant might grow where this Tree stands.

Unfruitful Trees, or unfruitful professors, such which are scandalous in their Lives, may hinder some hopeful Plants from coming into the Church or Vineyard of God; their barren and scandalous lives may prevent them.

O faith one (that may be is well inclined) what a proud Man, and proud Woman is that? See after what manner they go, what a Dress the Woman wears, and how conceited the Man is; are these Saints? are these Members of such a Church? I see no difference between them and others.

Again, and what a vain and frothy sorts of Persons are others that are amongst them; seldom any Pious, or Gracious words proceed out of their Mouths, but they seem as loose and wanton as any People; do you not hear how full they are of idle Jestings and frivolous Talk, God deliver me from such Professors as these, I will not come amongst them.

And faith another, see how others among them indulge their Children in Pride, Idleness, and Vanity, and connive

Barren Professors abuse God's Patience.

What is meant by cumbering Ground.

The hurt scandalous and barren Professors do is unto God's Vineyard.

From whence it is or why God is displeased with barren Professors.

Isa. 5. 3, 4, 5.

at their Sin, and they regard not their Parents, but are disobedient; and yet are Born with, others (that they look upon to be of the World) have their Children in more subjection, and Educate them better than these do.

And saith another, there is such and such Men that are Members of such a Church, and behold how earthly, how covetous, and worldly they are? they pursue the World like other Men, as if their very Hearts were in it; away with them for there is no difference, I will not come among them, they are cruel to their poor Servants, and make mere Slaves of them, and let them not have what is necessary and convenient for them, have no mercy nor bowels; also see what a Father that Man is to his poor Son, he would have him work, but hardly will allow him either Meat to Eat, nor Cloths to wear.

And then there be others among them who are deceitful and false in their dealings, there is no trusting them, for they will gripe and pinch you in their Trading, if you are not aware of them, they will break their words and promises at every turn.

And then there are others also that are idle, and negligent in their Callings, and so bring themselves and their Families to want and poverty, that they become a charge to the People, and because the Church will not uphold him in idleness, they villifie the Congregation.

Saith another and I know some others of them that Pray not in their Families, and perhaps not in private neither, their Religion is all abroad in the Church, there is none at Home; shall I come into such a Church, into such a Vineyard: Thus they Cumber the Ground; but God forbid there should be such among you my Brethren, I hope better things of you; tho' I thus speak, yet it is well if there are none such in this and other Churches; for no doubt where barren Trees are in God's Vineyard, but it is thus, and this is the sad effect of their evil Lives.

And as they Cumber the Ground in general, so they Cumber some part of it in particular.

I. They Cumber poor Ministers by their cross and peevish Spirits, alas they cannot tell how to carry it towards them, this too often they find as the sad effects of their Spirits and Behaviours.

II. They also Cumber and grieve the Spirits of their pious Parents, how do they mourn to see their Children that profess Religion, walk unsuitable, and not as becomes the Gospel; what is a greater joy to godly Parents than to see their Children walking in the Fear of

God, as John speaks of his spiritual Children, *I have no greater Joy than to hear that my Children walk in the Truth.* 3 John 4.

But on the contrary, what a perplexity is it to them when they walk loosely and are vain, and carnal; what grief was it to Isaac and Rebecca his Wife, to see their Son Esau to act like a Profane Person, and taking to Wife one of the profane Heathens, and Esau was Forty Years old when he took to Wife Judith the Daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the Daughter of Elon the Hittite, which were a grief of Mind to Isaac and to Rebecca, they were grieved at his Marriage foreseeing the sad effects of it; besides knew it was a breach of Gods Law, and for which he punished the old World; but afterwards we may see it was a sore Incumbrance to these godly Persons, and Rebecca said to Isaac, *I am weary of my Life, because of the Daughters of Heth, if Jacob take a Wife of the Daughters of Heth, such as these, &c. what good shall my Life do to me;* also what a Cumber was it to the Mind of Eli to see his Sons who were Priests, to act and do so wickedly in Israel, and how did God trouble him, because he did not restrain his Sons from those abominable deeds of darkness. See 1 Sam. 2. 30. Gen. 26. 34, 35. Gen. 27. 46. 1 Sam. 2. 22, 23.

III. These barren Fig-trees also are grievous, and do Cumber the Minds of all pious and serious Christians, Members of the same Church; they are even ashamed to hear of their Pride, Passion, Earthliness, Idleness, and of their woful omission of religious Duties, and frequently neglecting of God's publick Worship, and of their undue Heats, fallings out, and abusing their fellow Members, or of their whisperings and backbiting of one another, and thus some part of the Vineyard is most lamentably incumbered with these Persons.

IV. But this is not all, these barren Fig-trees are a sad incumbrance to the whole Congregation, or the whole Vineyard, what troubles do they bring upon the Church in their Discipline, were it not for this sort (I mean barren Professors) what sweet Peace and Concord would there be in all the Churches of the Saints.

V. Moreover, and besides all this, they are cumbersome unto God himself, what saith the Lord, *they are a Trouble to me, I am weary to bear them. I am able to bear, suffer or endure them no longer; God speaks after the manner of Men, they are a burden or cumbersome to him. I will ease me of my Adversaries, I will cut them down, they afflict and incumber my Mind, they have worn out my Patience, my Goodness, my long-suffering, behold I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves.* They are cumbersome to God himself. Isa. 1. 14. Amas 2. 13.

VI. They are troublesome to the Lord Jesus

Barren Professors cumber Ministers.

And also godly Parents.

*They are al-
to trouble-
some to Je-
sus Christ.
Mark 9.19.* Jesus Christ, they grieve and afflict his Spirit, O faithless Generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you, it is said he looked upon them, being grieved at the hardness of their Hearts; and th it not (think you) trouble a Vine-dresser to see such Plants, such Trees that he hath Dug about, Dugged and Pruned, still to remain barren and fruitless; why so it troubles the Lord Jesus, the Spiritual Vine-dresser to look upon thee, O thou barren Fig-tree, O think of it.

*Barren Pro-
fessors, a
burden to
the Holy
Ghost.
Isa. 63. 9,
10.* VII. They are also barren to the Holy Ghost, they also cumber or grieve the holy Spirit, they quench the Spirit, nay, vex the Spirit of God; in all their afflictions, he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them, and carried them all the Days of old; but they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their Enemy, and Fought against them. The Holy Ghost strives with them, but they resist his motions, and rebell against the light, and instead of bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, they bring forth the fruits of the Flesh.

*Barren Per-
sons cumber
godly Fami-
lies.* Lastly, (as to this) I might add, they cumber the Family, if it be a godly and pious Family where they live; if the Wife be a fruitless Tree, or barren of that which is spiritually good, being froward, peevish and passionate, how is the Mind of the godly Husband cumbered, and Prayer neglected, and hindered by the means of those incumbering Thoughts that afflict him upon this account, so it is if the Husband acts unbecoming a Man professing Godliness, the godly Mind, and Spirit of the Wife is sadly incumbered.

If it be a Servant that professes Religion that is unfaithful, how doth he incumber the Spirit of his Master or Mistress, or if the Master or Mistress who are Professors, and yet walk in an Evil way, (which perhaps is only known to their Servant, who is a godly and gracious Person) what a trouble is it to such a Servant, putting him or her upon a temptation to conceal his Master's or Mistresses wickedness for his peace sake, tho' may be thereby he comes to loose his Peace, by conniving at Sin, which he ought not to do.

*Barren Fig-
trees keep
off the influ-
ences of the
Sun from o-
ther Trees.* And as the barren Fig-tree thus incumbeth the whole Vineyard, and each part thereof, so also it cumbeth the Ground, in that it keeps off the Influences of the Sun from other Trees which grow next unto it.

Even so the barren and unprofitable Professor hinders or keeps off the sweet influences of Joy, and comfort of Communion from gracious Persons, they being grieved and disquieted at their carnal, scandalous, and unfruitful lives; for as nothing tends more to greaten

and sweeten the Communion of godly Persons, than the satisfaction they have in each others true Piety, so nothing tends more to imbitter and spoil their comfortable Communion, than the thoughts (and just cause of fear) that some amongst them are unsound, barren, and unprofitable Persons, having no sincere Love to Christ, nor to his dear Children.

VIII. Moreover the barren Fig-tree cumber the Ground in that it sucks, and draws much of the moisture of the Earth which might tend to feed and nuorish some fruitful Trees.

So some barren Professors who are Poor, and cannot live without the Charity of the Church, do rob or draw away part of that Supply from the godly Poor, who (tho they are industrious according to their ability) yet by reason of Age, Sickness, or some other distressing Providence, cannot subsist without the Charity of the Church, (I charge no Person, neither let any think in my publick speaking after this manner, in this, or any other like case I direct my words particularly to them,) for if I knew any guilty, I should take another way, even lay their Evil directly before them: But as there were some in the primitive Churches that worked not, but were idle Drones, that lived upon the Honey which the painful Bees gathered, taking up a Profession for Bread, or following of Christ for Loaves, so it may be feared, that there are too many such who get into Churches in these Days.

*Barren Fig-
trees or
barren Pro-
fessors draw
that moi-
sture away
that might
feed and
nourish good
Christians.*

And he said, Lord, let it alone this Year also.

1. Note that barren Souls are spared through the Prayer and Intercession of Jesus Christ, he made Intercession for Transgressors: How did he Pray for those that put him to Death; you barren Souls hear, and take good notice of these Words, see by what means you are spared, and who it is that keeps off the fatal Blow, when the Ax of divine Justice is ready to Cut you down, O hold Justice, hold, stay thy Hand, Lord let yet this Sinner alone, and that Sinner alone one Year longer, saith the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Barren Pro-
fessors spa-
red through
Christ's In-
tercession.
Isa. 53. 12.*

2. Note that God is slow to Anger, or slow to Wrath, not willing presently to cut down Barren and unfruitful Persons; how long did he wait on Israel of Old, even Forty Years (saith he) was I grieved with that Generation, &c. and it was some Hundred of Years before he Cut them down, and cast them utterly off.

*God is slow
to Anger.*

3. Ob-

3. Observe that Jesus Christ intercedes for a little longer time before God Cuts down barren Persons, one Year more after Three Years were gone and no change, no Fruit found, but as loose and as carnal, and unprofitable as ever.

4. We may also infer that there is cause to fear that some who have been unfruitful for several Years under gracious means, or under the labours of a painful Ministry, will never become fruitful Fig-trees; you heard, that bare not the Second, nor the Third Year, seldom ever are fruitful, yet upon the use of other means, such that Christ can, and sometimes doth use, it may be made fruitful.

5. Moreover it appears from hence that Christ spares no Cost, nor Pains, in an ordinary way, to mak barren Persons fruitful; *what could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it.* He speaks of Digging about it, and Dunging it; he will use the most likely means in order to make it fruitful; he will open the Root, touch the Sinners Conscience, he will see to remove the Earth or worldly Spirit which lies too close to the Heart or Root of this Tree, and perhaps thereby also discover the Worm that is at the Root, or some beloved Lust that spoils its growth, and makes it barren.

6. But if after all means that Christ useth, fruitless Persons remain still barren, are still unbelieving, still impenitent, still unholy; Justice will at last in Wrath cut them down, Vengeance will at last overtake all unprofitable and fruitless Professors.

7. Moreover we may infer that God will leave all Persons who sit under the means of Grace, under the sweet shinnings and waterings of Heaven, especially such who are planted in his Vineyard, without excuse, they of all Men shall justifie God when he executes his Judgments upon them; what will such have to say, when God deals with them here whilst in this World, in his displeasure, or in the great Day when he brings them to the Tribunal of Jesus Christ.

Lord, let it alone this Year, this one Year also.

O what a kind, patient and compassionate an Intercessor is the Lord Jesus Christ, and what Love and Affections hath he to such Sinners whom he sees are in a perishing Condition; when the Ax of God's Wrath is up, Christ steps in to hold God's Sin revenging Hand, O my Father, let this and that Man live one Year longer, O turn away from this thy Anger, I will yet see what may be done; my Brethren, *Moses* in his Praying for barren Israel was a Type

of Jesus Christ. *And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this People, and behold it is a stiff necked People. Now therefore let me alone that my Wrath may wax Hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great People.* But how did *Moses* plead with God to turn his Anger away. *And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy Wrath wax Hot against thy People; nay, he Cries, if thou wilt forgive, their Sins; if not, Blot me I pray thee out of thy Book which thou hast written.* Exod. 32. 9. 10. Ver. 32.

Certainly our blessed Mediator far exceeds in Compassion the Typical Mediator, whose Love to God's Glory, and the Honour of his Name, and the Good of his People was very great; O my Father, let this Sinner be spared a little time, if it be but one Year, and I will try what fresh Corrections may do, may be the Rod may work more upon them than my Word hath hitherto done, and tend to make their barren Hearts to become fruitful, I will also stir up my Servants to awaken them by a more sharp and searhing manner; but if after what I purpose to do, by the strivings and operations of my Word, Spirit, and Rod, they are made fruitful, well, but if not, thou shalt Cut them down.

And if it bear Fruit, well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. verse 9.

I will when all I purpose to do, is done, intercede for these unfruitful Persons no more, and then before my Brethren such Persons are undone for ever, if Christ once will stand up to plead with God no more for them, and exercise no more Patience towards them, nor use no more means to do them good, but leave them to divine Justice to Cut them down, they must perish for ever.

Thus I have briefly opened the parts of this Parable.

Secondly, I shall observe one or two Propositions, from one or two of the principal Parts thereof.

Behold, these Three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none, &c.

Behold! This is a Word of admiration, as well as a Word that calls for attention and observation: And also a word of Lamentation, and of Commiseration.

Behold! Wonder! I, even I, the mighty God have taken Pains with this and that Person, I have used means to humble them to discover their Sins, Evils, and barrenness to them, and then come Year after Year, to see what Fruit they bring forth, and Behold, this I have done, and

and yet I find no Fruit. From hence
Note.

1. Doct. That it is matter of Wonder, and cause of Grief and Lamentation, to see Men planted in God's Vineyard, or sit under the Blessings of his House and Ordinances, and yet be barren or unfruitful, and not Cut down. In speaking to this I shall

1. Prove the Truth of the Doctrine.

2. I shall shew wherein this Wonder lies, or in what it consists, and why it ought to be observed with Lamentation.

1. As to the Proof of this Truth, see what God saith on the like occasion by the Prophet, *Hear O Heaven, and give Ear O Earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled against me.* God would have the Heavens and the Earth wonder and be astonished at the Sins and barrenness of the Jews, or Church of Israel, and to Weep, Lament, and Mourn over them, *Why should ye be stricken any more? why should I use any more means with them to make them fruitful, who after all I have done, bring forth nothing but wild Grapes.*

Isa. 1. 2, 3.

Moreover it is said that our blessed Saviour marvelled at the unbelief and hardness of the Hearts of the Jews, to whom he Preached, and among whom he wrought Such mighty Miracles. *And he marvelled because of their unbelief; his Divine Doctrine being delivered with such Power and Authority, and his Miracles and Works so amazingly glorious and wonderful. And in another place it is said, he looked about with Anger, being grieved for the hardness of their Hearts.* Here both the Admiration and Sorrow of our Lord himself is expressed, because of the Sins, Unbelief, and Barrenness of these Persons.

Mark 6. 6.

Mark 3. 5.

Many such like Texts I might mention, but what I shall speak under the next general Head will further prove this.

Secondly, I shall shew you wherein this Wonder doth lie, and the cause of Observation and Lamentation doth consist, viz. that such God takes so much pains with, and waits so long upon, that they may become fruitful, and yet after all are barren.

From whence that barren Professors may be beheld with Wonderment.

1. Is it not strange it should be thus, considering the barren Earth which is Digged up, and Dunged, and watered with Rain from Heaven, becomes fruitful, and answereth the pains and cost of the Husbandman; moreover Trees which are planted in a fruitful Soil, being well pruned and purged, commonly become fruitful. But many Professors and Members of the visible Church, tho' they like

Ground dug, and dunged by Jesus Christ and the blessed God, remain barren; and tho' they are planted in a Vineyard, on a very fruitful Hill, and abundance of gracious means used, and much patience exercised, in order to make them fruitful, yet after all, are like a barren Fig-tree, or a Vine that brings forth wild Grapes: Sirs, is it not strange that God should plant a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed, and yet any should be turned into a degenerate Plant of a strange Vine. The Jewish Church was of God's own Constitution, and the first Plants choice Plants, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c. But what strange Plants were found in it in after times, how barren and unlike those first planted? the like might be said of the Gospel Church, and Gospel Plants. The many Showers that fall from Heaven, makes the hard and barren Earth fruitful and tender, but all the divine Showers of the Word, and heavenly Doctrine, makes not the Hearts of many Professors fruitful nor tender, but they abide as hard and as barren as ever. Again the Inanimate Creatures answer the pains used, so do Irrational Creatures also, they readily obey and yield to the wills of their owners, they in their kind do what can be expected of them; but Mankind rebels against, and refuseth to comply with the Will of God, and answereth not his cost, pains, and expectation. *The Ox knows his owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider.*

Jer. 2. 21.

2. Is it not a strange thing, and to be wondered at, to see Men value a Name to live above Life it self, or to esteem a Cabinet of very small worth above a Jewel that is of an inestimable value, or to see Men professing themselves to be Wiser than others, or excelling in Wisdom, to value or prefer the Shell above the Kernel; or is it not strange for Men to hear that the Sentence of Death is passed upon them, and know not but it may be executed in less than Four and Twenty Hours, yet fear nothing, and tho' they have a Pardon offered them yet slight it, will not take hold of it.

3. Is it not strange that Men should Sow Tares, and yet believe they shall Reap Wheat? The barren Professor Sows to the Flesh, and yet thinks to Reap to the Spirit; notwithstanding what Paul positively affirms to the contrary; Gal. 6. 7, 8 or is it not strange to see Men rather believe the Devil and their own deceitful Hearts, than to give credit to what the Holy God and Jesus Christ, say and testify.

Wonder O ye Heavens! to behold the Creature to abuse the Creator, abuse his infinite Wisdom, Grace, Love,

N

Pati-

Patience, and long-suffering, yea and condemn the sweet enjoyment of his Love and Favour, and a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away, for the sake of an empty World, or meer Vanity.

5. Behold, the King Courting a Beggar, and is denied! behold a Physician, who shed his own Blood to cure the Wounds of his Enemies, waits at the Door, and yet the miserable wretch there lets him stand all Night, and refuses to apply that Blood, the vertue of that Blood to heal his Wounds; but chooseth Death rather than Life.

These things are to be considered with great wonder, and all the folly and evil hinted, meet in such Persons mentioned; whom the Holy and Jealous God useth most gracious means to make fruitful, waiting upon them Year after Year, but still observing they bring forth no right Fruit; he at last cries, *Cut them down*, and yet they fear him not, but go on in the evils of their Hearts and Ways, until they are indeed Cut down and sent to Hell.

But to proceed to another Proposition.

2. Doct. *That the reason why some barren Professors are no sooner cut down, is by vertue of Christ's Intercession, but yet at last when no means will do, but the Signs and Plagues of Barrenness remain upon them, they are cut down with dreadful Vengeance.*

1. In speaking to this, I shall shew that barren Persons in the Church of God, with other Sinners that are born with so long, is through the Intercession of Jesus Christ.

2. Shew why Jesus Christ Intercedes for barren and unfruitful Persons.

3. Shew who they be that are in danger to be Cut down with dreadful Vengeance.

4. Apply the whole.

Some say it is Christ that only is the Chief Vine-dresser, that says, *stay yet this one Year also*; but others think it refers to his faithful Ministers, who are employed under him to be his Vine-dressers.

Ministers as well as Christ himself pray that barren Persons may be spared a little longer. But certainly the Lord Jesus is chiefly meant hereby, tho' it may comprehend his Ministers also, who with Moses of old entreat God to exercise Patience towards unfruitful Professors and impenitent Sinners.

That our blessed Lord doth intercede for Sinners (as well as for Believers) this Parable fully doth evince, besides it is said, he Prayed for such (or leastwise for some of them) that put him to Death, Luk. 23. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

Moreover it is said, *he bare the Sins of many, and made intercession for Transgressors.* Isa 53. 12.

Secondly, *Why doth Christ intercede for Sinners.*

1. Because he Died for them; he that laid down his Life for them, before will not refuse to Pray for them; he that Bled for them, will no doubt plead for them. *Why Christ intercedes for barren Sinners.*

2. Because he ever lives to make intercession with the Father, and it is by vertue of his Intercession that the merits of his Blood are applied, and become effectual to poor Sinners, he intercedes, that Faith may be given to such that believe not, as well as that it may be increased, strengthened, and not fail in such in whom it is already wrought, *then I must bring, &c.* that is, all that are given to him, and one way (I have elsewhere shewed) he useth in seeking his lost sheep, is by his Intercession. Heb. 7. 25. Joh. 10. 16.

Aaron when he went into the Holyest of all, bore the Names of all the Children of Israel upon the Breast-plate of Judgment, and interceded also for the People, when guilty of great Offences; and this signified the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath before him, and in his Memory all the Names of God's Elect, whether called or uncalled.

3. Because Christ knows that if he intercedes not for Sinners, or pleads not for them, one Sinner could not live a moment longer; indeed the Lives of all Men are continued as the Fruit or Effects of his Interposition and gracious Mediation, and when he ceaseth interceding for any People or particular Person, Vengeance falls upon such a People and Person immediately, and no doubt but many temporal Judgments are kept off, and prevented by Christ's gracious Intercession.

4. Because without Christ's Intercession, the Gospel is neither given to a People, or Nation, nor continued to them; nor is, or can the Gospel (or means of Grace) become effectual to any Person or People, without Christ intercedes in the Case, for as all Grace my Brethren, was purchased by Christ, so it is given forth by vertue of his Intercession to the Father, the Lord Jesus doth not only say, Lord, let this, and that Sinner alone this Year, (but if they belong to him) he also Prays and intercedes for Grace, or a Blessing upon the Word and Ordinances, that so they may believe and be renewed, and eternally saved.

5. Because some barren Persons the Lord Christ knows are in the Election of Grace, indeed who of them were not vile and barren before quickened, called, and made fruitful; and hereby also

also he leaves all Men without excuse: *My Brethren* the Sins, Unbelief and Barrenness of wicked Men is the material cause of their Damnation.

Thirdly, *I shall shew you who they are, that are in danger to be Cut down with dreadful Vengeance.*

What Professors are in danger of being cut down.

Rom. 3. 2.
Psalm. 147.
19, 20.

1. Such barren Persons are in danger who have had great favours shewed them, yea more cost spent on them, and labour taken with them, than many others ever had; and yet after all remain barren, carnal, and unbelieving. What wonderful favours did God shew the Jews above all People in the World? He gave unto them his Covenant, the Law, Ordinances, and Promises; nay, I may say all he had to give, or bestow under that dispensation to such who were a People Constituted a National, and Typical Church; pray read the 105th Psalm, the Apostle shews also, that unto them were committed the Oracles of God, &c. and saith the Psalmist, *he shewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as to his Judgments they have not known them.*

Ila. 5. 4.

And hence the Lord said, *What could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done to it?* and yet after all God did to them, and for them, they were barren, and brought forth wild Grapes, and therefore at last were Cut down with Vengeance.

Mat. 11.
23.

Heb. 6. 7.
8.

Moreover, what cost and Pains was Christ at with them, to whom he Preached, and among whom he wrought such wonderful Miracles? these were said to be exalted up to Heaven, but they remaining barren, see what our Lord says, *And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell* Compare this with what the Apostle saith, for the *Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is Dressed, receiveth Blessing from God, but that which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursings, whose end is to be Burned.*

When the Patience of God is wearied out, he cuts the Sinner down.

2. Such are in danger who wear out the patience and forbearance of God, when the Lord having waited long, as he did on the old World (a Hundred and Twenty Years) and yet they are barren, abominable, or unbelieving, these are near cutting down; God waits not only one Year after Three were gone, but many Years, and all is in vain, well now (saith he) *I will arise, I will devour at once, I will exercise Patience no longer, I have used great means, and and have born so long that my patience*

is now worn out, *Cut them down, why Cumber they the Ground.*

3. When God withdraws all means of Grace from a People or Person, when his Spirit being grieved, nay vexed, will strive no longer with them, but they are given up to their own Hearts Lust. He sometimes says, as he said to Ephraim of old, *Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone.* You my Ministers, let those Sinners alone, your words shall have no effect upon their Hearts, and my Spirit let them alone, do not reprove them, nor move them to Repentance, nor to seek after Christianity more, and God may say to Conscience also, let the Reins lie loose upon the neck of their Lusts, and rebuke them not when they Sin; certainly when God deals thus with any Sinners, they are near cutting down with Vengeance, God threatned his People of old, that he would not punish their Daughters when they committed whoredom, &c. What can be a worse sign of God's Wrath, than quietly to let Men alone in a sinful and Christless State? For

That which follows or attends this Judgment is, *hardness of Heart, blindness of Mind, and a seared Conscience;* the Holy Spirit being utterly withdrawn, they fall under the Plague of hardness of Heart, and it is then impossible that they should be renewed again unto Repentance, being left to Judicial hardness, these fall upon this into a deep Sleep, yea sleep the sleep of Death; and it is much, if this sort do not become Enemies to the People of God, and mock at Religion, being filled with malice and spite against Jesus Christ, and tread under Foot the Blood of the Son of God.

APPLICATION.

You that are barren Professors, Tremble, O how dismal and dangerous a thing is it to be a Sinner in *Sion*, or to be in a dying and withering Condition, you know not where your partial Apostacy may end.

Be exhorted to try your selves, and prove your own Work, O know if possible how things are between God and you; it may be God's Ax is up, and Christ yet Cries, *Lord, let it alone this Year also;* you may have but one Year left to get an interest in Christ, to get Faith and a changed Heart, nay, may be much of that Year is also gone, what will you do when God begins not only to shake the Tree, by stretching out his hand by Sickness, but proceeds to give the fatal Blow, and cuts you off by Death, or take thee away with his stroke, then a great Ransom cannot deliver thee, fruitless

When the Spirit will strive no longer, God cuts the barren Soul down.
Hof. 4. 17.

Hof. 4. 14.

1 Tim. 4.

2.

Heb. 6. 5.

6.

Job. 36.
18.

fruitless Vines and Fig-trees are Fuel for eternal Burning, they shall be thrown into the Fire.

2. Comfort, to you (tho' you are decayed,) who are true believers, there is notwithstanding all that hath been said, a word of Comfort to you, God will revive you, and restore your Souls, heal your backslidings, and love you freely.

You shall take Root downwards, and bring forth Fruit upwards, you shall be pruned, to be made more fruitful, you are not of that sort that draw back to perdition, you are ordained to go, and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain; if therefore any that hear me this day are not under barrenness or decay, but to revive, they have cause to Praise and Magnifie God for ever.

Heb. 10.

39.

John 15.

16.

The Parable of the Two Sons bid to go into the Vineyard.

S E R M O N IX.

MAT. 21. 28, 29, 30, 31.

But what think you, a certain Man had Two Sons, and he came to the first, and said Son, go work to day in my Vineyard, Ver. 28.

He answered and said, I will not, but afterward he repented and went, Ver. 29.

And he came to the Second and said likewise, and he said, I go Sir, and went not, whether of them Twain did the will of his Father, they say unto him the First, Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you that the Publicans and the Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you, Ver. 31

TO open the Scope of the Parable,

1. I shall explain all the parts of it.
2. Note one or two things from thence.
3. Apply it.

May 24.
1696.

1. The Scope of this Parable, it is evident it is to shew what Deceit and Hypocrisie was in the Pharisees, and that some great Sinners were in a better State and Condition than they, See Verse 31. Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.

2. To discover that self righteousness in Persons seem to promise fair, and to be ready to do the will of God, who

only do but pretend to do it; and such who are great Sinners, who by their profane lives declare an averseness to God and Religion, and so seem to say, they will not go into Christ's Vineyard, yet God's Grace soon changeth their Thoughts and Purposes, and they repent, and go.

Or it may refer to the Jews and Gentiles, the first sought after Righteousness and found it not, the other sought not after it, yet found it.

1. By the certain Man is meant the Lord Jesus Christ. Parts explained.

2. By the Vineyard is meant the Church. Why the Church is compared to a Vineyard is explained in other Parables.

3. By the first Son is intended the Publicans, or such who are great Sinners, gross and scandalous Sinners, or according to some, our Lord means the Gentiles.

4. By the second Son is meant the Pharisees, or Moralized and self-righteous Persons, or the Jews.

5. By coming to the first, and second Son is meant God's gracious approaching unto them in the dispensation of the Gospel, and offers of Pardon and free Justification by Faith, or the tender of Christ.

6. By bidding them to go and work in his Vineyard, is meant their doing the Work, and Will of God, or accepting of Christ, and entering themselves into his Church.

7. To day, refers to the present time, not to delay the doing of it.

8. The first that answered I will not, but afterward repented, &c. refers to the Publicans and Harlots, or profane Persons, or of those of the Gentile Nations, who by their evil lives, and horrid wickedness, say they will not enter into Covenant with Christ, or obey his voice nor go into his Vineyard, or believe and do his Will, and Work; for tho'

tho' none perhaps will say thus with their Mouths, yet all ungodly persons speak thus by their Works, and in their Hearts; but afterwards being convinc'd of their great wickedness, they repent of their folly, and do believe in Jesus Christ.

9. The Second Son said, I go Sir, namely the Pharisees, and other Hypocrites, and formal Professors, by their outward Profession, and fair pretences to Religion, these seem to say, we go Sir; they promise fair, but their Hearts and Lives being un sanctified, they do not what the Lord doth require, and look for at their Hands.

10. By the Kingdom of Heaven here may refer both to the Gospel, Church, and to the Kingdom of Glory; some conclude the last only. *Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans, and the Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.*

Our Saviour doth not hereby intimate that the Pharisees, and such like Persons, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven afterwards, or as if great Sinners go to Heaven first, and that they shall follow after, but by these Words he means

1. That some Publicans and profane Sinners should go to Heaven, and not many of these Pharisees, and self-righteous Persons.

2. It doth imply that great and notorious Sinners are more likely to be prevailed with to receive Jesus Christ, or are sooner wrought upon than self-righteous ones are.

Question, Why are they called Sons, both sorts being in their natural State?

Ans. Metaphors and Parables, I have told you often, do not run on all Four: Yet all Men by Creation are the Sons of God, and upon that account, they may be so called.

Thus having briefly opened the several parts of this Parable, I shall take notice of one or two points of Doctrine.

1. Doct. That Pharisaical and all self-righteous Persons are in some Sense in a worse Condition than the open profane, the latter being sooner brought to believe in Christ than the former.

Two things I purpose to do in speaking to this proposition.

1. Shew the Character of a Pharisaical Person.

2. Give you the reasons, why open and profane Sinners are sooner brought to believe in Christ, than self-righteous ones, who have a Sober, and Moral honest Life and Conversation.

1. They are such that think better of themselves than they think of others. *The marks of a Pharisaical Person.* And he spake a Parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. *Luk. 18. 9.*

They are such who have a marvellous opinion of the goodness of their own Hearts and State, they trust in themselves (or have much confidence in respect to the safety and happiness of their Condition) tho' never changed, or renewed by the Spirit, and Grace of God; and hence the Pharisee broke forth and said, *God I thank thee I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican, and therefore* *See the Parable of the Pharisee & Publican opened, where their Character is more largely opened.* *Luk. 18. 11.*

2. The Pharisees were the most precise, and devout Sect that was among the Jews, and were esteemed by all Men generally godly and holy Persons; Brethren, to be a Pharisee was not then a Name of reproach, but rather an honourable thing, as appears by Paul's Words, when he was charged before the Council; *after the most strictest Sect of our Religion I lived a Pharisee: Also at another time he cried out in the Council, I am a Pharisee and the Son of a Pharisee.* *It was no reproach among the Jews to be called a Pharisee.* *Act. 26. 5.* Had it been a Name of reproach, he would not have pleaded thus for himself; even so all Pharisaical Persons may be generally lookt upon to be very good and godly Men and Women, and be much esteemed of by the People; they may not only commend themselves, praise themselves, but others may commend, and praise them also; 'tis not enough that a Man may pass among others for a devout and good Christian, who only Judge by appearance. O say some People, if this Man be not a godly Man, and doth not go to Heaven, Lord have mercy upon us. What not this Man, that prays Morning and Evening, that hears and reads Sermons, and is very Charitable, and is guilty of no horrid Crimes, as others are. And shall open profane persons, or Publicans and Harlots, go into the Kingdom of Heaven before such. *Act. 23. 6.*

3. The Pharisees notwithstanding all their seeming Religion and Godliness, were corrupt in the matters of God's Worship, and had also corrupted the Commandments of God by their Traditions. They had a great veneration for their own Rituals and Traditions of their Fathers, yet rejected the Law and Precepts of the Law, and the Doctrine of the Gospel also; they were like some now adays among us, who cry up such Service that is of human composition, (as more Divine and Sacred than any part of God's holy Worship) or such things that God hath directly Commanded. *Mat. 15. 3. 6.*

manded. 'Tis noted that some of the Jewish Rabbies said, that he sinneth as much who eateth with unwashen Hands, as he that lieth with an Harlot.

Luke 18. 10. 4. They were very proud, hypocritical and selfconfident, *God I thank thee I am not as other Men, &c.* But yet it seemeth they would be thought to ascribe all their pretended attainments to God, tho' they held the Power of *Mans-will*, yet would not own it, or appear to assume the glory of their holiness unto themselves; as the *Amenians* at this day seem to ascribe all to God, when their Doctrine leads them directly to glory in themselves: They made their boast of God, as such that knew his Will. See *Rom. 3. 18. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, Verſ. 17.*

And knowest his Will and approveſt the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the Law, Verſ. 18.

And art confident that thou thy self art a guide of the Blind, a light of them that are in darkness, Verſ. 19.

An instructor of the Foolish, and teacher of Babes, &c.

They would be thought to be the only true Ministers of God's Word (like some in our days) who account all others foolish Teachers, yet are very ill Men, and a covetous Generation, as the Pharisees were.

Mat. 23. 14.

Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for you devour Widows Houses, and for a pretence make long Prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater Damnation.

Secondly, I shall shew you why self-righteous Persons are not so soon brought to believe in Christ, as those who are openly prophane or scandalous Sinners.

But let me premise one or two things before I proceed,

In what respect Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven sooner than Pharisees.

Mark 10. 23.

1. Let it be considered that in respect of God nothing is hard, he can as soon, and as easily convert a Pharisee as a Publican; or an honest, civil and sober Woman, as a common Harlot; 'tis all one to God with whom all things are possible, to change the Heart of a rich Man as a poor Man; yet our blessed Lord saith, that a rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. Therefore let it also be considered that our Saviour speaketh after the manner of Men, in respect had to the Subject to be wrought upon, who are so wofully blinded through self-love, pride, and conceitedness; that there is more probability of the conversion of a great scandalous Sinner, than of a Sober, Moral and self-righteous Person.

3. It is also so in respect of the revelation of God's Word, Christ saith,

Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before such, or rather than such, because God leaves such proud, and self-righteous ones, as a just Judgment, to themselves; great Sinners are converted when the other sort are left to themselves, and fall into Hell, and so perish for ever.

4. Moreover this appears to be so by our own experience, we see now (as it was in the Gospel days) that many great Sinners are converted and do believe in Jesus Christ, whereas multitudes of sober and self-conceited Persons are never moved to seek after Christ and Salvation by him.

Quest. Well, but what is the cause of this, and why is it thus?

Ans. It may be occasioned from that great Blindness and ignorance of these Pharisaical Persons, it is hard to perswade them that their state is nought, or that they are in no better a Condition than the vilest Sinner in the World; what they pray often, read, hear Sermons, give to the Poor, pay all Men what is their due, are no Swearers, Lyars, Adulterers nor Extortioners, and yet say that their Conditions is nought, nay worse than the Condition of Publicans and Harlots, how can this be?

1. I answer, are they guilty of no Sin, have they not broke the holy Law of God, or violated the Precepts thereof; is there no Lusts in their Hearts, no covetous desire, no wrath, anger, or malice against their Neighbours; 'tis plain that the Pharisee principally refers to the duties of the second Table, when he boasted of his own righteousness; can that Law justify that Person whom it accuseth and condemns, and lays under its fearful Curses?

Besides have not these very persons violated the precepts of the first Table also, and that in a lamentable manner.

Have they no other God but the Lord? do they Worship him only? viz. believe in him, trust in him alone; do they love him with all their Hearts, with all their Souls, and with all their Strength? do they love him above Father and Mother, Son or Daughter, Gold or Silver? alas, if they do not thus, they are Transgressors of the Law, and are found guilty by it before God, and will God, do they think, destroy the Sanction of his holy Law, and make himself a liar to acquit such guilty ones? hath he not said *he is Cursed that continueth not in all things that are written in the Law to do them?* and that he will by no means clear the guilty?

2. Can Man's own moral, legal, or inherent righteousness justify him at God's

God's Bar, or is there any who can be justified in the sight of God by the righteousness of the Law? O how blind are these poor wretches, that they see not the necessity of one to fulfil the righteousness of the Law for them?

The cause why Pharisaical Persons are so rarely converted.

2. This brings me to the Second reason why these People are so hardly brought to believe and be converted.

It is because they see not that absolute necessity of Christ to save them; can you persuade a Man that feels no Sickness, no Disease, to go to a Physician presently least he dies? for what faith he, I am not Sick, I feel no pain, no Illness, I ail nothing.

Can you persuade a Rich Man who hath his Bags full of Silver and Gold to go a begging to his Neighbours Door? no, no says he, let the Poor go a begging, such who have nothing to supply their wants and necessities; as for me I am Rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing, I know not that I am Poor, miserable, wretched, and naked, neither will I be persuaded to believe such is my Condition, I am not like this Publican.

Rev. 3. 17.

3. 'Tis because Satan the God of this World hath blinded their Eyes, so that the Gospel is hid from them, the Devil, my Brethren, hath more power over these to blind their Eyes, and to deceive their Souls with vain hopes of Heaven, than he hath over such who are notorious Sinners; O how easy is it for him to sway and turn them that way the bent and byass of their Hearts leadeth them,

Mankind being Born under a Covenant of Works, is persuaded naturally that it must be by his own righteousness he must be raised, since his Fall was by his own unrighteousness; that which we have in our selves an inclination to do, we need not much persuasion to perform.

4. Because self-righteous Persons whilst they so continue, they are not called to believe or to come to Christ, and be sure such that Jesus Christ calls not, will find it hard, nay impossible to come to him. *I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* No, no, they are sensible Sinners which Christ is to be offered unto. *The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost;* and who are they? even Publicans and Harlots, or such who are convinc'd of their woful Condition, or such who find the weight and burden of their Sins, and are undone in themselves; this was spoken concerning the conversion of *Zaccheus, the chief of the Publicans:* It was the lost Sheep, the lost Groat, and the lost Son that was sought after, they are the Sick who need a Physician,

Mat. 9. 13

Luk. 19. 10.

Mat. 11. 28.

the hungry Soul that needs Food, and the thirsty Soul that needs Drink, and the naked Soul that wants Cloaths, and the polluted and filthy Person that needs the Fountain to wash in; and so it is the poor lost Sin-sick Sinner, who sees his filthiness, that wants a Saviour, and to such only ought Jesus Christ to be tendered to; and indeed none else will receive him.

Not that I suppose any can come to a thorough fight of their Sin and Misery until they are convinced by the holy Spirit.

So much shall serve to shew why self-righteous Persons are so hardly brought to believe in Christ.

Secondly, I shall in a word or two shew how it comes to pass that open, loose, and scandalous Sinners are sooner wrought upon, than the proud Pharisee.

Why loose & scandalous Persons are sooner converted than self-righteous ones.

But by the way, let none of these think themselves to be at present in a better Condition than the sober or civilized Person; I mean, whilst they remain wicked, or continue in their Sin, for Damned they will be, unless they are Born again, or are regenerated, see 1 Cor. 6. 9. Luke 13. 3. Nay, the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all such, O what is more abominable than open wickedness; moreover such wretches oft-times pull down National Judgments, are the shame of any People who profess Christianity, and ought to be punished by the Judges. God encourage our Reformers, and perfect the Reformation that is happily begun. But why do these then go into the Kingdom of Heaven before the other sort?

I. I answer, because these have no such seeming grounds to deceive them, or false Foundations to build upon, they cannot (I mean) pretend to any righteousness of their own, seeing their Consciences Condemn them (as guilty of horrible Crimes) before God, the Law cannot (they must needs think) relieve them who break it every day, therefore it is easie for these to be convinced that they are lost and undone Sinners; hence Satan hath other Baits for these.

1. He persuades them that God is merciful, and will, if they acknowledge their Sins, forgive them, tho' they daily live in those Sins which they do confess, and seem to bewail.

2. He tells them also that Jesus Christ Died for Sinners, and they need not doubt but they shall be saved, tho' they find not, experience not, the fruits and effects of his Death in their own Souls

Souls, thus are great Sinners deceived by these, and such like suggestions?

2. But if neither of these Baits will catch them, then he perswades them that they may find Mercy at the last Moment, and from thence they defer (many times) the work of Faith and Repentance till Sickness and Death comes; and tho' these Baits are not so powerful and prevalent as those are (I before mentioned) yet were it not for these cunning Snares and Devices of Satan, we might hope to see more of this sort to embrace Jesus Christ, than indeed we do. But how to counterwork Satan as to those baits and devices of his, I purpose to shew in the Application: But to proceed, great and scandalous Sinners are sooner wrought upon than self-righteous persons.

1 Tim. 1.
15.

II. Because it is the design of God, and apparently his absolute purpose to magnifie his own sovereign Grace in calling, pardoning, and saving of great Sinners. Christ commonly acquainted or made known himself to this sort, hence the Pharisees reproached our blessed Saviour for keeping Company with Publicans and Sinners. *This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners; that is, great Sinners, the chiefest of Sinners. David doubtless well understood the design and purpose of God in forgiving great Sinners, which made him Cry, Lord, forgive mine iniquities for they are great.*

Psal. 25.

Jer. 3. 5.

III. Because deep convictions of Sin are more likely to seize upon these notorious Sinners than others, when made sensible of their abominable evils, and how they have violated and transgressed the Law of God, and then also considering how Jesus Christ is offered to Sinners as Sinners, (and that God's Arms stand wide open to embrace such that have done as evil things against him as they could) this must needs tend to melt them into Tears of Godly sorrow and grief for their iniquities; Brethren, Conscience cannot be so soon blinded in these, as it is in sober, and moral Persons; when a Pardon is freely offered to a self condemned and abominable Traytor, and stout hearted Rebel, that hath conspired the Death of his gracious Sovereign, this tends to break him into pieces: Conscience being made use of by the Lord in Conviction, will flatter no Man so far as it is enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God.

God seeks to magnifie his pardoning Grace in the sight and sense of a Sinner forgiven to his own glory.

IV. Because God will magnifie his Grace in the free pardon of Sinners in their own sense and feeling, shame and self-abbhorrence; this is one reason doubtless why the Lord is pleased to work upon great Sinners; they

shall see their filthiness, and loath themselves in their own sight, when God receives them into his Arms of Mercy, that they may admire his infinite Grace and goodness to them, and know it is not for any goodness or worthiness that is in them, that he doth vouchsafe pardon upon them. *And they shall loath themselves for the Evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And again saith the Lord by the same Prophet, then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you, be ashamed and confounded for your own ways O House of Israel. People that are Proud and exalt themselves, or have high thoughts of their own worthiness, are left of God, but great Sinners are brought quickly to Shame, Confusion, and self-abbhorrence, and deep humiliation; but so much at this time.*

Ezek. 6. 9.

Ezek. 36.

Verf. 32.

S E R M O N X.

M A T. 21. 28, to 31.

But what think you, a certain Man had Two Sons, and he came unto the First, and said Son, go work to day in my Vineyard, V. 28.

He answered and said, I will not, but afterward he repented and went, V. 29.

And he came to the Second, and said likewise, and he said, I go Sir, and went not, V. 30.

I Shall now proceed to a Second Point.

Preached
June 20.
1696.

2 Doct. (*And he said I go Sir, &c.*) Note from hence, that some Persons seem, pretend, or in appearance do obey God's Call, and close with Christ, but really and truly do it not.

In speaking to this Truth.

1. I shall shew you who these are, or how they may be known.
2. Apply it.

1. They are such that pretend to Religion, and that make a Profession of it, like as the Pharisees did; these seem to say, we go Sir, but 'tis but in shew or appearance only, they are not truly Religious, *Who they are that say they go, and yet go not.*

ligious, they do not those things which God requires of them, it is not every Religious duty which a Man may be found in, that demonstrates him to be a true Christian, no, not the discharge of every external Duty commanded of God; Religion lies not simply in an outward Profession, but in Faith and the Love of God, it doth consist in an holy Trust and dependance upon Jesus Christ, and in having the Heart brought into a blessed conformity to the power of true Godliness, having the Image of God stampt upon the Soul; therefore all that say, *they go*, and yet do no more but make an outward Profession of Godliness, or subject to some external precepts, do but pretend they go to work in Christ's Vineyard, for really they do it not.

2. Such that come under some convictions of Sin, and upon it reform their lives do many things; thus it is said of *Herod*, *Mark 6. 20. for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a Just Man and Holy, and he observed him, and when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly.* They may Reform their Lives as to some gross Acts of Sin, and have a reverent esteem of Christ's true Ministers, and hear the Word with some seeming joy, but still harbour in their Hearts some principal Lusts which they will not part withal, they like *Herod* keep their *Herodias*, are never brought to loath, and leave their darling Sins, but so far as they act in a reformation of Life, they seem thereby to say, Sir, I go, but they in Truth go not.

3. Such go not that only Act, and do many Duties under legal Terror, or fear of present or of future Wrath, who when the Storm is over that was raised in their Souls, their seeming Zeal and Affections presently cools in them, and in a little time become as bad or worse than they were before, as we find in the same *Herod*, who did not only cut off *John Baptist's* Head, but did deride our blessed Saviour when he was brought before *Pilate*.

4. Such that act in religious Duties for Life, or according to the Tenure of the Covenant of Works, thinking by their own performances and obedience to obtain the favour of God, not being ever convinced of the necessity of the Righteousness of Christ; trust not, depend not, or believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be justified by Faith only; but from a principle of self-love, cleave unto their own righteousness, or trust in themselves that they are Righteous: The People who act thus, do but say *we go Sir*, but go not. The Pharisees were those who said *I go Sir*, these no doubt our Saviour means by this Son

Moreover all such say, *we go Sir* but it is no farther than will suit or stand consistent with their own carnal Hearts, Ease, and self Interest: They may be convinced of the Doctrine of Free-grace, and that 'tis by Christ alone that they must be Justified, that is by his Obedience (as it is apprehended by Faith alone) yet never received Christ by an act of saving Faith; they are willing to receive him as a Priest to Atone and make their Peace with God; but are not for receiving him as a King, so as to subject in Heart and Life to his Authority, and yield universal obedience to his holy Precepts; these seem to present Christ with a Paper wherein their own terms are contained, viz. how far they will go, or how far they will follow him; this sort cannot deny themselves, as to receive Christ as a Prophet, to hear him in whatsoever he says unto them; they cannot deny themselves and take up their Cross and follow him fully, and suffer reproach or outward loss for his sake; for alas, the World still is the great Idol which is in their Hearts, which they fall down before, and are therefore great Idolaters; for to love our selves, our own honour, Gold and Silver, or any thing above Jesus Christ is Idolatry.

6. Such that take up a resolution to follow Christ at another time, 'tis not to Day when Christ calls, but they say we go, i. e. we will believe, we will repent and follow Christ, and become religious when we have a more fit and convenient Season, or have got rid of some Worldly business and incumbrances, there is something of greater moment in their Eye at present, than to close with Christ; they are like unto the Man that our Saviour bid to follow him; but he said Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father. Let me live at home and please my Father (as if he should say) and stay until he is Dead, that I may not be dispossessed of my Inheritance, but after my Father is Buried, and I am possessed of my Estate, I will follow thee.

7. One said unto our Saviour, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, Luk. 9. 57. This Man was a Scribe, See Mat. 8. 19. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.

Here is a Person that seems to offer his Service to Christ, he says I will go, I will follow thee, but it was no doubt before he had well weighed the matter, and considered, or counted the Cost; this Man takes up a sudden resolution unadvisedly, may be he met with some heat in his Affections, or transport of Joy

Some say they go Sir, but 'tis but a little way, so far as their Interest, &c.

Acts 3. 21, 22, 23. Mat. 16. 23, 24, 25.

Some say they go, but their time is not come, 'tis too soon for them to close with Christ.

Luk. 9. 59.

The Pharisees said we go, but went not.

they that say go, and go not.

See the Parable opened of a Man building a Tower, &c.

by hearing of Christ's gracious Words, and beholding the wonderful Miracles he did : Doubtless by our Saviour's answer his Heart was not right, his resolution was either bottomed upon some sudden flashes, or from his curiosity, or hopes of meeting with some outward advantage, but saw not the difficulties he might expect to meet with if he did indeed follow Jesus Christ.

Thus some say we go, *i. e.* as soon as their affections are warmed under an awakening Sermon, they with much seeming Zeal may become Members of a Church, but after a while, finding what they are likely to meet withal, they faint, and are sorry they made such a rash Profession, or perhaps they have stately Houses, and are honoured among Men; but when they find Christ hath no House, no Land, no outward Preferment for them, but contrariwise do see they are like to loose the Love of their Friends, and have all that is dear unto them in this World exposed to loss, they repent, and tho' they said *we go Sir, go not*, they hold not out the whole Journey but look back.

APPLICATION.

1. How do many Persons deceive themselves, thinking they do that which they do not, and are that which they are not, *and say they go, when they go not*, believe, or think they are Christians, when indeed they are no better than meer carnal worldlings, and utterly without one saving dram of Grace in their Hearts.

2. Let such that are Sober, and that in all moral Vertues seem to excel others look to it, since so many of this sort do but thereby deceive themselves, saying, *we go Sir, but go not*, they, it may be feared, do not know what it is to go into Christ's Vineyard, like some Servants who when Commanded to do such or such a thing, say, *I will do it Sir*, but through ignorance do something else of a quite contrary nature to what was Commanded : Christ bids them believe, that they may be justified and saved, but they either rest upon a false Faith, or upon a sober and moral Life, not knowing what true Faith is, nor the Righteousness of God is.

3. We also infer from hence what a woful Condition they are in, who deceive their own Souls by present promises of what they will do, and what they will become hereafter, whereas alas they know not what a Day may bring forth.

4. Let Ministers and Churches learn Wisdom from hence, and take care who they receive into Communion, lest they

take some in who are only under some sudden Convictions, and raised and warm affection, and so unadvisedly offer themselves for Communion, who never received Jesus Christ into their understanding, nor came to be of a sound Judgment; for this is but like a sudden Land Flood that soon glides away; they in heat of affections say, *I go Sir, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, but do not first sit down to account the Cost; are quickly cooled in their Love, and return again to Folly.

But to proceed to another point of Doctrine, from the answer of the Second Son, who said said, *I go Sir, but went not*. I observe from hence.

3. Doct. That present promises touching future Faith and Holiness, seldom ends in real performance.

Three things I purpose to do here.

1. Shew you from whence it is that some persons do make present promises, touching future Faith and Holiness.

2. Shew you why, or from what cause it is that these present promises seldom end in real performances.

3. Apply it.

1. They may make these present promises from those common Convictions and Illuminations of the Word and Spirit of God; the light of Convictions may be so great in their Hearts, in respect of Sin, as to the guilt thereof, and their present danger thereby, that they can do no less than purpose and promise what they will do hereafter; we read of some that *were once enlightened, and had tasted of the good Word of God, &c.* who never were savingly enlightened nor renewed by the Grace of God.

1. These may be convinced by the Law of God that Sin is a great Evil, and that they are great Sinners; certainly Judas saw this, the guilt of Sin may lie heavy upon their Consciences.

2. They may see that if they Die in this Condition, they are like to be undone forever, and therefore from hence they may come under great Terror for fear of wrath and eternal Punishment, and they may have some abhorrence of Sin in respect of the guilt thereof, but not abhor the act, nor the filth of Sin.

Now from hence secretly they resolve, purpose, and promise to close with Christ, and become new Creatures before they Die, therefore an accusing Conscience may stir up Men to say we go Sir.

3. They may make these promises from the nature of an accusing Conscience, for when a Mans Conscience is awakened,

Why some make present promises touching future Holiness.

Heb. 6. 4, 5.

Fear of Hell stir up some to say, we go Sir.

awakened, it will terrifie him fearfully, yea, it will never let him rest, but lay on such lashes, and gripe him so sorely, that unless he doth something to appease and still his offended Conscience, he cannot well bear it. Conscience, Brethren, will spare no Man when it is awakened, according to its light, though its true, it is very subject to be misled for want of a right Guide, or true light in the Understanding, and from hence may perhaps be pacified, and become more still and quiet by those promises a poor Sinner may make of Conversion unto God hereafter; it is therefore to still and quiet Conscience, more than to please God: 'Tis not because Sin is against God, contrary to his Holy Nature, and a breach of his Holy Law; but because it is against them, disquiets and torments them, they find it is against their present ease and future happiness, exposing them to eternal Wrath and Vengeance: And from hence they promise they will leave and forsake it, and become new Creatures.

Men may say I go Sir under some sudden afflictions.
4. It may be the effect of some sore Affliction or Judgment that these Persons may be under, God may lay them on a sick-bed, and seem to shake them over Hell, and then they like some Seamen when in a Storm, may promise what they will do, and how well they will live for the time to come, if God will spare them at this Season; but when they are raised up and delivered from their present fears or dangers, they forget all their promises which they before, when distressed, made to God; so much as to the first thing.

Secondly, Why do these promises seldom end in real performances, what should be the reasons of it?

Satan may stir up Sinners when they are awakened to make promises touching future Faith and Repentance.
1. I answer, 'tis from the grand Agent that stirs them up to make these Promises, which is the Devil no doubt, Satan fearing he is in some danger of losing them, by finding what fear and trouble doth attend them, that he might blind their Eyes, and deceive their Souls, puts them upon the making of these promises of amendment of Life hereafter.

Brethren, the Devil cares not what promises Sinners make to become good and vertuous hereafter, if he can hinder them from closeing in with Christ at present.

Beloved, pray remember that to morrow is the Devils time, I mean 'tis the time he chooseth for Sinners, but God's time is to Day. Go Work to Day in my Vineyard, to Day if you will hear my voice harden not your Hearts.

Heb. 3. 7, 8. Verse 13. While it is called to Day—boast not

thy self of to morrow—Behold, this is the Prov. 27. 1. accepted time, this is the Day of Salvation. 2 Cor. 6. 2.

But this time Satan likes not of, he is for another time, 'tis too soon saith Satan, indeed he is for no time, he would have the Sinner in Hell before he sets about this Work, and therefore strives to deceive the Soul, by putting it upon resting on promises to close with Christ hereafter; certainly such promises will come to nothing that the Devil stirs up Men and Women to make.

2ly. Present promises, resolutions and purposes touching future Faith and Regeneration, seldom end in real Performance.

Because the End and Design of such Persons that make them is abominable.

1. For evident it is, their design and purpose is to be wicked and ungodly at the present, for what can be the purport of these promises else; certainly they who do not resolve to turn to God till to morrow, purpose to abide Enemies to God to Day; now if this be so, it appears that these People Sin at present with full purpose and resolution of Soul: Brethren, that Rebel that tells his Sovereign he will lay down his Arms hereafter, doth thereby positively declare that he will at present remain in his Rebellion.

This being so, can any think that God should ever bless or succeed such promises, since the design and purpose of the Man that makes them is so vile, abominable and hateful to him; what can be a greater aggravation of Sin, than to Sin with full purpose and resolution?

2. Because it argues that these Persons have but a partial Work upon their Hearts, their Hearts are divided; for tho' their Judgments and Understandings may be somewhat enlightened, yet their Wills are not bowed nor subjected to the obedience of Christ, nor are their Affections changed. Balaam no doubt had much light in his understanding (tho' not savingly enlightened) He hath said which he heard the Words of God, which saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance, but having his Eyes open.

Numb. 24. Verse 5.

How goodly are thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel.

Hence he desired to Die the Death of the Righteous, but 'tis evident he was a wicked Man, his affections being never changed; the Apostle saith, He loved the Wages of unrighteousness. Brethren, this discovers these Men to be Hypocrites, and these promises and purposes arise from their base and filthy hypocrisie, Conversion is never fully wrought until the whole Soul in all its Faculties are brought under the power of Divine Grace; but alas how often is

is it that the Conscience of Men may be convinced, and much enlightened, when their Wills and Affections remain under the influences of Sin and Satan.

3. These promises seldom end in real performances, because they are made directly in opposition to the Divine Precept, and holy Will and Command of God, who says, *to Day if you will hear my voice, harden not your Hearts, go to Day and work in my Vineyard.*

Heb. 3. 15. *Boast not thy self of to morrow for thou knowest not what a Day will bring forth.*

Prov. 27. 1. *Certainly God will never assist a Man to perform such Promises that are made in Contempt of his Authority, and in opposition to his express Command: Shall Men once presume to contradict the Almighty God, besides he hath positively declared, that such whom he called, and they refused, and would have none of his Counsel, that when they call upon him, he will not hear.*

Prov. 1. 24. 25. *Present promises made in a Man's own strength are never performed.*

4. Because such promises and purposes are made only in the strength of the Creature, for surely they must needs suppose they have power to do those things at any time, that trust in their own purposes, promises and resolutions what they will do hereafter; and do not presently, or in God's time go, whose assistance they may expect if they come in his time; but that help and aid which he hath promised to Day he hath not promised them to morrow, or for the time to come; and what is any Creature able to do of himself? True, the *Armenians* by their Doctrine intimate Men are indowed with power to Repent, without any special or supernatural Grace; which notion may put People upon undoing Temptations, even to delay, or defer the great Work of Regeneration until Sicknes, or Death comes, or until they are grown old; for if they have such ability or power as they say, Men are subject to conclude, that they may have the same power to morrow, which they have this Day: But O take heed, 'tis not in Man that walketh, to direct his Steps; *without me you can do nothing.* Faith is not of our selves, *it is the Gift of God; 'tis if God, peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth.* But God hath said, he will not give them that Grace who did refuse to hearken to him when he called, nay, and God doth often withdraw the Influences of his Spirit from such that reject his offers in his own time; and evident it is, that they resist and grieve the holy Spirit in its Motions, Strivings, and Operations to Day, and put him off with vain purposes and promises, we may do well to observe what the Lord saith, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Men.* And what can a Man

John 15.

2 Tim. 2. 25.

Gen. 6. 6.

do when the Spirit of God hath done striving with him.

5. Because the Life of Man is so uncertain, and the most of these Persons are cut off in Wrath before that time is come when they purposed to make good their Promises of Faith and Repentance; O how many are lost, and are now in Hell who made such promises as these are? 'Tis just with God to cut them off, that wilfully rejected his great and gracious tenders of Grace in the proper Season thereof.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. From hence we may perceive what the reason is, that so many People are left of God, who content themselves with present purposes and promises touching future holiness. I am persuaded the Devil this way, I mean by this subtle device, destroys more Souls than by any other whatsoever: Therefore for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of your precious and immortal Souls, beware of him; O take heed that you rest not satisfied with such promises; say Sinner in thy Heart when such Thoughts rise in thy Mind, this is Satan, 'tis he that puts me upon making these promises thereby to deceive my Soul.

Reproof.

2. This may serve also to reprehend, and sharply to rebuke, all such Persons who flatter themselves with such purposes, who say, *I go Sir,* when they go not, or who think they do the thing which Christ Commands them, when it is far from it; he Commands them to believe for Righteousness, and they rest upon doing, or upon a sober moral Life: Mark. 16. Christ says, *he that believeth not, shall be Damned,* but tho' they believe not, do not go out to him, and rest upon him, yet by their own Works and inherent Holiness, they doubt not but they shall be saved, and that they fully thereby answer his requirement.

Exhort.

3. Let me Exhort you all that are yet in your Sins, to close with Christ this Day, and not to delay it until another time; and that I may the better prevail with you, take a few Motives.

M O T I V E.

1. Consider the shortness and uncertainty of your Lives, you are not Lords and keepers of your times, No no, your times are in the Lord's Hands, many a Candle hath been put out before half Burned, many a fair Flower cut off before its withering time was come, what a multitude of short and small Graves may you see.

Powerful motives to Sinners not to delay closing with Christ. Plal. 31.

2. Now you have an opportunity in your Hands, *Why is there a prize in the hand*

Prov. 17. *Hand of a Fool to get Wisdom, seeing he hath no Heart to it.* If you had an opportunity to Day to get One or more, Thousand Pounds, and you are told this is the time, 'tis to Day, would you defer the looking after it till to morrow? or would a condemned Criminal that hath a promise of a Pardon if he looks after it to Day, delay it to another time? O that Sinners from hence would see their Folly.

3. 'Tis great folly, and very dangerous to defer the matters of our eternal happiness. Because if you neglect the present time, you may loose the Day of your Visitation, the Day of Grace may be shorter than your Lives, as appeareth concerning Jerusalem, *O that thou hadst known at least in this thy Day the things which belong unto thy Peace; but now they are hid from thy Eyes.* Sirs, your Days in this World may be lengthened out, and yet the Day of Grace may be past with you.

4. Because Moral indisposition to close with Christ, may be more encreased tomorrow than 'tis to Day; Sin is of a hardning nature, if a Man as soon as taken Sick, looks out for, or sends for a Physician, there may be more hopes he may be Cured, than if he should neglect any means until his Distemper hath got greater power, and his natural strength is wasted; 'tis easier to break a Colt and bring him to the Saddle, than 'tis an old Horse that runs wild in the Wilderness; a young Plant is sooner pluckt up than an old Tree: To speak after the manner of Men, all know that these things are so, tho' 'tis true God can as soon subject the Rebellious will of an old Sinner, as one that is young; yet since this is the Lords time, viz. even to Day, from what I have said, you may learn Wisdom.

5. Delay not the time, in regard of Satan; for if you put Christ off with flattering and deceitful promises to day by the Devils instigations, he knows what great advantages he may thereby gain; that Devil that binds you to day with Withs, may bind you to morrow with Cords and Fetters of Iron; the old Man encreases in his strength in Sinners, as well as the new Man doth so in Believers.

6. In regard of spiritual Judgments, which may make the new Birth not only difficult, but impossible: Open Sins God usually punisheth with visible Judgments, but wilful neglects of the Day of Grace he commonly punisheth by spiritual Judgments. *Make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed.* Which

terrible passage (as one observes) is no less than Six times repeated in the New Testament; See that fearful Text, *In thy filthiness is lewdness: Because I Ezek. 24. have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my Fury to rest upon thee: Because I have purged thee, that is, I have made use of means to Purge thee, or I have purged thee from some gross acts of wickedness; but still thy Heart abides vile and filthy; all future means to cleanse thee shall be taken away, no Sermon, no Conviction, no Affliction shall ever have any effect to humble thee. I Verse 14. the Lord have spoken it, and it shall come to pass, and I will do it; as you have it expressed in the very next Verse.*

Quest: What shall we do to prevent this great Danger, of delaying or resting on present promises, touching future Faith and Repentance?

1. *Ans.* I answer, be perswaded and made sensible that it is the Devil which stirs you up to make these promises, and so to put Christ off, and grieve the Spirit; know assuredly 'tis Satan out of a design to ruin your Souls, by cheating you of the Day of your Visitation.

2. Consider that he that puts you upon making these promises to Day, to Repent and turn to the Lord hereafter, will put you upon making the same promises, and resting on like purposes to morrow, and so till Death overtakes you, and your Souls are lost for ever, for before the Devils to morrow will never come, it will be still to morrow.

3. Consider, that thus to delay this Work, is Rebellion against the Lord, nay and that you do secretly resolve and purpose in your Hearts to continue in your Rebellion, and that these promises (as you have heard) do imply no less; therefore you Sin with a resolution and purpose of Heart.

4. Consider that it is not in your own power to Believe and turn to the Lord, it must be done by the Spirit of God, by his help and by his assistance, and therefore it must be done in his time, and before his Spirit hath done striving with you, call to mind that Text, *my Spirit shall not always strive with Men.* Gen. 6.

5. Pray earnestly, *A Man cannot receive anything unless it be given him from above.* Look up to Heaven, remember God's absolute promises, *I will take away the Heart of Stone out of your Flesh, & give you a Heart of Flesh.* This is a promise made to such that are, and have been great Sinners: 'Tis not made upon any Conditions to be performed by them; therefore how do you know but

may do this thing for you, therefore plead this promise with God.

6. Labour to be sensible of the corruptions of your Nature and polluted Hearts. *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* 'Tis perverse, and it will supplant you if you take not heed, there is nothing so false and so deceitful as the Heart of Man, and in many ways doth deceive; and this way also, even by your making of these false and deceitful promises.

7. Endeavour to observe the motions of the holy Spirit; *The Wind bloweth where it listeth.* Mariners observe the Wind, and when it serves, they hoist up their Sails, do not quench nor grieve the Spirit, because he is the only Agent in your Conversion; all that are Born again, *they are Born of the Spirit.* A Man may reform his Life by the power of natural light; but no Man can thereby change his own Heart, nor form Christ in his Soul, Regeneration is a new

Creation: Not the Work of the Creature, but of the Creator. *Not Born of John 1. 13. the Flesh, nor of Blood, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.*

8. Attend diligently upon the Word of God, and upon all the means of Grace; 'tis good to be there where God usually worketh upon Mens Hearts: *Faith comes by hearing,* and hath not God that way wrought upon many Sinners that were as bad as thou art.

Consolation, this may tend much to the comfort of such that would not rest contented in making promises to Work in God's Vineyard, but as soon as called, immediately they obeyed that Call.

They did not delay, but made hast to keep God's holy Commands, it is a sign they were beloved before time, because drawn by Love to Christ, in time the Gospel came not to them *in Word only, but also in Power;* which shews that they were Elected to Salvation. So much to this Parable. ² Thes. 1. 4, 5.

The Parable of a Man casting Seed into the Ground.

SERMON X.

MARK 4. 26, 27, 28, 29.

And he said, so is the Kingdom of Heaven, as if a Man should cast Seed into the Ground, Verf. 26.

And should sleep, and rise Night and Day, and the Seed should spring up he knows not how, Verf. 27.

For the Earth bringeth forth Fruit of it self, first the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear, Verf. 28.

But when the Fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the Sickle, because the Harvest is come, Verf. 29.

THE Evangelist Mark only hath Recorded this Parable, and if in opening it, we have respect to what goes before, it may hold forth.

1. That such Persons who would not be deceived, ought to take care what Doctrine they hear, *Take heed what you hear,* Verse 24. Or what Seed it is that is sown in your Hearts, and also they ought to take heed into what Ground the Seed falls; for according to the nature or quality of the Seed will the Product be; if the Seed be not good, or of the right kind, the Fruit will not be good.

2. Moreover, take heed what you hear, as to the measure or quantity of your hearing; for if God Sowes plentifully, or measure forth abundantly unto you, he expects increase accordingly; and likewise to the frequency of your hearing. *With what measure you mete, it shall be measured unto you, and you that hear shall have more.* O see that you are much in hearing, if we measure unto God much of our time, in hearing with all care and diligence, (provided it be his own Word) and receive it into our understanding, wills, and affections; God will measure forth full Mercies and Divine Blessings unto us, for it is doubtless the improvement of our time, and the means of Grace our Lord doth here refer unto, *For he that hath, to him shall be given, &c.*

2. There-

The Scope of
the Parable.

2. Therefore one design of our Lord in this Parable considering what precedes, is to shew the great Blessing that attends a faithful and diligent attendance upon the Preaching the Gospel.

3. To shew how insensibly the Seed of the Word takes Root, and Springs up in the Hearts of such that receive it, and also to discover unto Ministers that they should not be over concerned if they see not the fruit of their labours presently, the whole success of it being from God, and to assure them, and those that hear the Word in a right manner, a Blessing shall attend them in the end.

4. Moreover to shew his Disciples that the Gospel should have success, and prosper in the World, and prepare all where it came for the great Harvest Day.

So is the Kingdom of Heaven

The parts
explained.

By the Kingdom of Heaven is meant God's providential Dispensation, or Ministration of the Gospel.

If a Man should cast Seed on the Earth,

Mat. 13.

Who the
Man is that
casts in the
Seed, and
also what is
the Ground.

A Man, the Man may primarily refer to the Son of Man, for it is Christ who Sows the good Seed. But since the Lord Jesus sleeps not, I conclude our Saviour refers here to his Ministers; for the Man that casts Seed into the Ground, is said to sleep Night and Day, and rise; besides the Lord Jesus knows how it grows and springs up, tho' Ministers do not.

Into the Ground,

By the Ground is meant the Hearts of Men, as is shewed in the Parable of the Sower which I have opened.

And should sleep and rise Night and Day, and the Seed should spring and grow up, &c.

What is in-
tended by
sleep Night
and Day.

By Sleeping and Rising, I understand is meant Ministers taking their natural Rest, Waking and Rising, Night and Day, like as a Husbandman when he hath sown his Seed, he is not over concerned about its rooting and springing up, but leaves the success of his Cost and Labour unto God.

And grows he knoweth not how.

A Husbandman knows not how the Seed he hath cast into the Ground springs up, it is a mystery in Nature, as no Man knows how the Bones grow in the Womb of her that is with Child, so Ministers know not how, or after what manner the Word of God takes rooting, and springs up in the Hearts of Sinners; the secret and hidden operations of the Spirit are not known by us, but are Mysteries of Grace, and known only unto God.

For the Earth bringeth forth of it self. In what

That is without the help of the Husbandman, or any human Power, yet not without the influences of Heaven, both in respect of the shining of the Sun, and the falling of the Dew and Rain from above: Man adds nothing to its growing up, nor should be solicitous about it. So Christ's Ministers having done their part, they may (with other Men) sleep or take their quiet rest, tho' not without looking up to God for a Blessing upon their Ministry, nor without an expectation of increase.

First the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn.

The Blade first appears, but it takes Root before that, for where the Seed takes no manner of Root, no Blade ever appears to spring up; by this we may perceive how gradually the Work of God's Grace goes on upon a Sinners Heart, that receives the Seed thereof; a Minister cannot quickly discern it, no nor the Person himself, he fears the work may not be begun in his Soul, there is so much corruption and filth in his Heart, and such great darkness in his understanding, but yet he bears up in a visible Profession, and in that the Blade doth consist, for what is the Blade of the Seed, but a profession of Religion.

Then the Ear, and after that the full Corn.

In the Ear is the Substance of the Corn, tho' at first 'tis tender, yet there is the Fruit, tho' not yet come to maturity; so Grace is wrought in a Believers Heart, in whom the Seed is sowed, tho' yet it is but weak, and wants time, or the heat of the Sun of Righteousness to strengthen the habits and exercise of that Grace, that so it may come to a farther maturity, or by degrees perfected like Corn in the Ear.

What meant
by the Ear
and full
Corn in the
Ear.

But when the Fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the Sickle because the Harvest is come.

When the Fruit is brought forth, that is, when it is fully Ripe, then the Husbandman, viz. the Blessed God by Death gathers his Saints unto himself; for by putting in the Sickle, I understand Death is meant, and as the Harvest in another place is called the end of the World, so the end of the World may be said to come on them that God takes away by Death, God will not cut down any of his People until they are fully Ripe, and fit to Die. Thus having briefly opened the several parts of this Parable, I shall observe one Proposition from the whole, viz.

What is
meant by
putting in
the Sickle.

Doct.

Doct. That the Seed of the Word sown in the Heart of a hearer, insensibly takes Root, and springs up, and gradually grows to full maturity.

In speaking unto this

1. I shall lay down one or two explanatory propositions by way of Premise.

2. Shew how or after what manner the Seed springs up, and grows in a Sinners Heart.

3. Shew why, or by what means it is in its springing up not quickly discerned.

4. Apply it.

First take two previous Propositions.

The Seed

roots not in all Hearers.

John 5. 38.

John 8. 37.

I. First, That the Seed of the Word doth not take Root in the Hearts of all Persons that hear it; the Seed that fell on the High-way side took no Root, and our Lord told the Jews, and ye have not my Word abiding in you; and again he saith, my Word hath no place in you, or no rooting in your Hearts.

The reasons why the Word takes no Root in some may be

Why the Seed roots not in the Hearts of some hearers
Mat. 13. 19.

1. Because they Watch not against Satan, who is said to catch it out of some Mens Hearts, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his Heart. The Devil hath many ways to catch the Seed out of the Hearts of Men that hear the Word (as I have shewed in explaining the Parable of the Sower.)

1. He sometimes puts the Word out of their Hearts, by filling them with Earthly thoughts, many perhaps whilst they hear the Word, have their Minds and Thoughts running upon the Worldly concerns, and they give way to Satan in these suggestions, to such a degree that they can give no account of what was delivered by the Minister.

Mat. 13. 19.

2. Satan may also catch it away by keeping them Ignorant of the Word, they understand not what they hear, neither do they know the necessity of endeavouring to understand it, and that they are this sort that Satan steals the Word from, is evident by what our Saviour saith, When any one heareth the Word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then comes that wicked one and catcheth it away. He understandeth not the Doctrine of the Gospel, he knows not the end and purpose of the Ministration thereof, nor the necessity there is of receiving Jesus Christ, nay knows not it is the Word of God, but looks upon it to be no more than the word of a poor Man by whom it is delivered.

3. By perswading them that they have received the Word already, and that it is rooted in them, and that the

Person need not trouble himself any farther, but only to hear the Word preached in order to Edification or farther growth, and not in order to the Implantation of Grace in his Heart; now from all these certainly Satan catcheth the Word away, so that it never takes root in them.

4. The Devil doth this chiefly Keep such that hear the Word from believing in Christ, who is the sole object and chief treasure of the Word; Satan cares not how often Men hear the Word preached, if he can keep them from believing or, flying to, or depending upon the Lord Jesus, by an act of true and saving Faith, he'll never hinder a Man from hearing; let him go and hear a Sermon every Day, if he finds the Person propounds no more to himself than only to hear and to rest upon that, and sees not, knows not the necessity of Faith, to receive or embrace the Lord Jesus in the promises.

II. Prop That some Persons in whom the Word hath taken some rooting, and the Blade also appears, yet in a little time it dwindleth away and comes to nothing, and the reason of this our Saviour shews is because the ground was not good, but either Stony or Thorny, (as you have formerly heard) my Brethren, a Heart not thoroughly broken or plowed up by the Convictions of the Spirit; or where the Weeds are not rooted up, nor the evil Worms destroyed; the Seed brings forth no Fruit unto perfection, for in them the love of Riches and cares of this life, choak the Word.

Secondly, I shall shew you how, or after what manner or by what means the Seed springs up. So insensibly it Springs up and grows, that not only Ministers may not know the Seed hath Rooted in this or that Persons Heart; but (as I hinted,) it may not be quickly discerned by themselves, yet their Seed appears to have taken rooting.

1. As to the means by which it is known, most evident it is, that the Word Preached, in the first place, lets in Light into their dark Hearts about the spiritual state of their Souls, and the way by which they came to be lost, and how recovered out of that woful Condition; so that the things of another World take up their Thoughts, which before they regarded not. The Entrance of thy Words giveth Light, it giveth understanding to the simple. Psal. 119. 130.

2. Tho' the rooting is unsensibly done, and not known to them, and yet the springing up appears, by the Spirits creating in their Hearts good desires, and inclinations, even such that they never found or experienced before, in such

How it appears that the Seed springs up in such a manner it is rooted.

Good inclinations and desires created in those in whom the Seed is rooted.

such a nature, nor in such a degree; they now love the Word, love to hear it; before a short Sermon seemed long to them, they had no love to it, nor a desire after it; but now it is otherwise, they have Spiritual inclinations, thoughts, purposes, and desires in their Souls, and talk of Heavenly things, yea love to discourse about Christ and the things of Christ, their Minds beginning to be Spiritual. *They that are after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit.* They also grow weary of their old Company, and choose to converse and keep Company with holy and pious Persons, or such who fear God; and by this it appears the Seed of the Word springs up in their Hearts.

Rom. 8. 6.

3. It gradually grows up, and farther appears by the Sense they have of the great evil of Sin, and corruptions of their Hearts, they longing after a thorough change both of Heart and Life; certainly where this is found and experienced, the Seed hath taken Root and springs up, (whether it be discerned by them or others, or not,) as the effects of their receiving the Seed, and of the rooting of it.

The Word
springs up
in them
that pant-
eth for it,
and love &
esteem it a-
bove Gold.

Psal. 119.
162.

Job 23.

Psal. 119.
127.
Psal. 19.
10.

4. It is, or may be farther known by that vehement Thirst that comes upon them after the Word. *I opened my Mouth, and panted for thy Word.* The Word is certainly received, if the Person prizes it, thirsteth after it, and longs for it, and rejoiceth when he meets with it, *I rejoyce at thy Word, as one that hath found great Spoil.* 'Tis beyond Mountains of Prey to them, and well may such rejoice that find the Pearl of great Price, or find Life, find a discharge from Death. *I have esteemed the Words of thy Mouth more than my necessary Food,* or that Food that sustains my natural Life, (which is more valued than Food that tends to make Life comfortable to us.) *Therefore I love this Commandment above Gold, yea above much fine Gold,* and not only so, but *the Word is sweeter than Honey, or the Honey Comb.*

5. Nay, when the Word is rooted, and springs up in the Heart, that Soul cries out for Christ, being fallen in love with Jesus Christ. *My Brethren,* there are two things that clearly shew the Word is rooted in the Soul of a Sinner, and begins to spring up.

Where the
Word is
rooted and
springs up,
that Soul
falls out of
love with
Sin, and in
love with
Jesus Christ
Rom. 7.
14.

1. When the Person is fallen out of love with Sin, withall Sin, and as it is the plague of his Heart, and the greatest evil, and will never be reconciled to it any more but can say, *I hate vain Thoughts,* and with Paul, *The Evil that I hate, that do I.* O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death.

2. When he is fallen in Love with Je-

sus Christ, and cries out, I must have Christ or die, what is my Life to me if I have not Christ; the rooting of the Word, is the rooting of the Sinner in Love to Christ. *If ye see my Beloved, tell him I am Sick of Love.* If you know Jesus Christ, or meet with him, or Pray to him, Pray for me; pray tell Christ, one that you know longs for him, pants after him, will die or swoon away if she have him not to be her Christ. *With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, &c.*

Cant. 5. 8.

Isa. 25. 9.

6. When the Soul embraces Christ in the Arms of Faith, even by that Faith which works by Love, and resteth wholly upon him and hath no confidence in the Flesh, but throws it self as an undone and heavy laden Sinner upon Christ, and finds inward, Peace, or Rest and Satisfaction.

7. And also upon this he takes Christ's Yoke upon him, as he is directed to do, *Come unto me all ye that Labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; well, and what more? take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.* That is the Yoke of Obedience, some pretend they obey Christ's Invitations, they come to him, rest upon him, they receive Christ as a Priest, who hath attoned for their Sins, and paid their Debts, but they do not obey his Precepts, or will not take his Yoke upon them. In these the Word may have no rooting; but if the Person readily yields universal obedience unto Christ, or takes him not only as his Saviour, but as his Sovereign; and because he loves the Lord Christ, will keep all his Commandments; deny himself, and taking up his Cross, and follows him whithersoever he goes; no doubt but the Seed of the Word is rooted, and springs up in that Persons Heart.

Mat. 11.
28.

Vers. 29.

Thirdly, I shall shew you why the Seed of the Word sown in the Sinners Heart, may not be presently discerned by a Minister of Christ, that it is rooted in his Heart. He may not know it, but may be ready to say, *I have laboured in vain, &c.*

1. It may lie (as other Seed oft times doth) under the Clods, the Soul hath received it; but the World is as a great Clod of Earth, and it hinders the Man from discovering what Christ hath done for his Soul, or perhaps some Corruptions bubble up, which makes him think there is no saving work begun yet upon his Soul; but he is ready to say (with Rebecca in another Case) *If it be so, why am I thus? O I am a vile Creature, what a polluted Heart have I? what base thoughts, nay blasphemous Thoughts have I? there is certainly none so bad as I,*

From
whence it is
the Seed
sown doth
not some-
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R

and

and thus corruption (or the sense of it) keeps the Seed of the Word or Faith from being discerned by the Person himself, who also keeps all to himself, and will not discover what strugglings he has within, for some time.

2. The Seed of the Word may be rooted, but the Person's Soul may fall under some fore Temptation of Satan, which fills him with fears and doubts; for commonly when first a Sinner receives the Word, Satan sets upon him; 'tis one of the principal times or seasons that he waits for; how many young Converts hath he assaulted and furiously set upon? As he was at *Joshua's* right hand to assist him (when he was engaging in a great work for God,) so he opposeth and resisteth all that first set their Faces *Sion* ward.

A cold pinching Storm may cause the Blade to Wither.

3. Perhaps a Cold pinching Storm may come upon the Seed soon after it is sown, and make the very Blade to wither (as oft times is observed,) so a Storm of opposition may be raised against a Person in whom the Spiritual Seed is sown; the poor Sinner is awakened, and begins to make a visible Profession of Jesus Christ; but lo, on a sudden a Wife raises a Storm of opposition against the Husband, to hinder him from proceeding any farther, or Parents upon an awakened Child, Son or Daughter; or an opposition may be made by some evil and unbelieving Neighbour, who may not only reproach him, but dissuade him as much as possible, and may lay such stumbling-blocks in his way that may stop him for a short time from declaring what God hath done for his Soul.

4. Besides the operations of the Spirit are compared to those of the Wind, which are sometimes very undiscernable. *John 3. 8. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but knowest not from whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is Born of the Spirit.* Sometimes the Wind blows very strong, and hath strange effects, most visible effects, but at another time it blows so insensibly that you can hardly discern it at all: So how strongly did the Spirit operate on those *Peter* Preached his first Sermon unto, upon the coming down of the Spirit, when Three Thousand were Converted, and presently cried out what shall we do; but at other times the Spirit blows like a small breath of Wind, and its operations are not soon discerned.

5. May be the Blade of Profession may not appear quickly, or be presently discerned, by reason the Persons Faith is small and weak, like a *Grain of Mustard Seed*, and the Soul from hence wants courage to tell others what

God hath done for it. *Come to me all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my Soul.* But God hath in a wonderful manner appeared to him and wrought in him; he had a strong Faith; but saith a weak Believer I would gladly tell the Minister, (under whose Ministry God hath wrought upon me,) my experiences, but I am ashamed, I fear I shall be able to say nothing, my Faith is so weak, and my fears and doubts so great and strong in me.

6. A Minister may not be able to discern that the Seed is rooted, and that the Blade that springs up, is the product of the Seed sown in good Ground, or in an honest Heart, because the Blade sprang up in the *Stony and Thorny Ground*, and shewed at first to be the right Blade, (or that which springs out of the good Ground) well says he, I know not what to think nor what to say, I hope the work is a saving work that is begun on this and that Person, but I must wait and see whether it will abide the Sun's scorching Beams, and cold Storms of Winter, for Hypocrites may say as much as they have said. I must see what the walks, and the humility and constancy of these Persons will be, and how they carry it under those changes they may meet with, or pass under, in the course of their lives: I have known saith he, some when Apprentices, very Zealous, who have come to nothing when they came to set up their Trades and were Married, they soon withered, and lost all that Religion they made a shew of.

APPLICATION.

This Parable may be of use.

1. To Ministers.
2. To Sinners.
3. To Believers.

1. We may infer from hence, that the faithful Ministers of the Gospel are Christ's Seeds Men, they cast the Seed into the Ground, and must not regard either Wind nor Weather, but Preach the Word in Season and out of Season: Moreover, according as they Sow, they may expect to Reap; if they Sow plentifully, are very laborious and constant in, their Work, they may see increase through the Blessing of God accordingly.

2. They also may learn from hence to be satisfied in a faithful discharge of their Ministry, let the effect thereof be what it will; they may sleep and rise Night and Day as other Men, and not be over solicitous about the success of their labours, the Issue of all lying in the special Blessing of God, and God accepteth of them. *For we are unto God*

a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. God will be glorified in such who hear and believe, in respect of his free Grace; so that unto them they are a savour of Life unto Life: And to such that believe not God will be glorified in his Justice, to whom they are a savour of Death unto Death, for thereby he will leave them without excuse in the great Day; and as to themselves they may say (with their great Master) *tho' Israel be not gathered, I shall be glorious*, God will glorifie them, they shall shine as the Stars for ever.

3. They may also expect success, tho' it do not appear presently, and therefore in the Morning Sow the Seed, and in the Evening not to withhold their hand, because they know not which may prosper; however it shall not be in vain, for as the Rain cometh down, and the Snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the Earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, &c. So shall my Words be that goeth forth out of my Mouth: It shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Secondly, to Sinners,

1. Let them see what sort of Ground they are, and cry to God to make their Hearts tender & fit Soil to receive the Seed.

2. Also consider what it is they propound to themselves in hearing the Word, and also what the cause may be why the Seed takes no Root in their Hearts.

3. They may likewise learn from hence to be much in hearing, and also to look up to God, or cry to him to open and prepare their Hearts to hear and receive the Word.

Thirdly, to Believers.

1. They ought to bless God that hath given them an hearing Ear, and seeing Eye, and an understanding Heart, when others in hearing, hear not, and in seeing See not, neither do they understand, it being given to them to understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but unto others it is not given.

2. Also you ought to try and examine your selves, and see whether the Seed revives and grows yea, or no in your Hearts, if not, to enquire what the reason of it may be; it may be feared that some grow more in the Head than in the Heart; more in Pride than in Humility.

3. Also let us all remember the Harvest Day will come, and since God affords us ripening Weather, the Warm shinnings of the Sun, and Showers of Heaven; what cause have we to Praise and Magnifie the Riches of his Grace, for many Nations have not the Word at all; the Seed is denied them, and others have not fruitful Seasons, the Sun shines not on them, nor have they such fruitful Showers as we in this City and Nation have. But Wo to them whether Professors or others, who oft receive this Rain, &c. and yet bring forth nothing but Bryars and Thorns.

The Similie of every Plant God hath not Planted.

S E R M O N X I.

M A T. 15. 13.

But he answered and said, every Plant my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

The Scope of the Similie.

THE occasion of this Similie rose from what precedes in the 12. Verse.

Then came his Disciples and said, knowest thou not that the Pharisees were offended after they heard that saying.

So the design of our Saviour herein is

1. To shew the sad State of the Pharisees, who, tho' they were so Nice and Strict as not to Eat with unwashed Hands, yet had unwashed or filthy Hearts and Lives.

2. That what Plants the blessed God hath not planted, tho' they may remain for a time, yet they shall be rooted up in the end. In speaking to this

1. I shall open what our Lord may mean by Plants.

2. Raise some Points of Doctrine from hence.

1. Every Plant. By every Plant may be meant

1. Every

1. Every Doctrine.
2. Every Practice.
3. Every Person.

False Do-
ctrines evil
Plants.

Mark 7. 7.

Evil Pra-
ctices and
Traditions
of Men, bad
Plants.

Col. 2. 23.

He lived
first at Che-
sham in
Bucking-
ham Shire.
Hypocrite
Plants, not
of God's
planting.

1. Every Doctrine, that is not of God, or a truth of God, tho' asserted and maintained with great confidence by Men of corrupt Principles, tho' it hath stood a long time, and thought to be an undoubted truth, yet at last it shall be rooted up, and be manifested to be an Error, and so be cast off and disowned for ever. The Pharisees held many pernicious Doctrines, Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. But all their evil Notions and Traditions, were in a few Years rooted up; and so in the end shall all the evil Plants of false Doctrines, and Errors of these perilous times; the glorious light of the Gospel (which will shine forth in the latter Days) will root out all Popish, Socinian, and Armenian Errors, with Quakerism, and all other evil Plants of false Doctrine whatsoever.

2. Every Practice, i. e. whatsoever is practised as a truth of God, or as an ordinance of Christ, or whatsoever he appointed not, as are Ceremonies introduced into the Worship of God; that are none of his Institution, but is merely human, shall be rooted up. Together with all acts of voluntary humility, such as Paul speaks of, Which things have a shew of Wisdom and Humility, and neglecting the Body, not in honour to the satisfying the Flesh. Many of which acts of pretended humility, are in several Orders of Men, in the Popish Church, and have appeared in others also in this Nation; Roger Crab is not yet forgot; (not long since this Crab strove to de-lude divers poor People, taught them to abstain from eating of Flesh, and to feed on Herbs and Roots.)

3. And every Person, that is, every one who seem Saint, or profess themselves to be Christians, or Plants in God's Vineyard, that are not sincere or true believers, or Plants of God's planting, shall be rooted up; tho' they may have stood and gone for good Christians a great while, yet they shall be cut down, and cast into the Fire at last. From hence Note.

1. Doct. That there are some Plants that God never planted, which shall be rooted up.

2. Doct. That those Plants that God hath planted, shall never be rooted up.
In speaking to the first of these.

1. I shall shew what is meant by planting, and also shew who planted them, and where those Plants may be planted.

2. Run the Parallel between natural and mystical Plants.

3. Shew why those Plants which God hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

1. Planting is setting or putting things into the Ground, whether they are Trees, Herbs, or Flowers. So mystical planting denotes the transplanting (in a Spiritual way) this or that Person. What plant-
ing doth de-
note.

1. From a Course of open prophaneſs into a visible profession; they leave their old Course of Life, their old Company or Companions, and also they leave the People and their Worship among whom they before walked.

And they may be planted in a visible Church of Christ, or be set in God's Vineyard and be called his Plants. The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the Men of Judah his pleasant Plants. True, these were Plants of the National Church of the Jews, they grew up by Generation as they sprung from the Loyns of Abraham by Isaac, Lineally, and were none of them transplanted to a better Soil, during the time of the standing of that Church State; but some of them were removed when the Gospel Congregational Church took place, and was Constituted by our Lord and his Apostles in the Primitive time. Iſa. 5. 7.

Quest. Who is it that plants People in the Gospel Church?

1. Answ. if they are gracious Men and Women, God planted them there; our Saviour shews some are planted by his Heavenly Father, who is called a Husbandman, &c. the Lord added to the Church daily such that should be saved. who plants
Persons in
the Gospel
Church.
John 15. 1.
Act. 2. 47.

2. Gospel Ministers may be said to plant them also, I have planted, and Apollo watered. God honoured Paul to be a great Planter in his Gospel Church; Ministers are said to Plant by Preaching, when God gives the increase, or bleſseth their Ministry to the Conversion of Sinners. But Ministers
are Plant-
ers.
1 Cor. 3. 6.

II. I shall run a parallel between an external Planter, planting; and a Spiritual Planter, and Spiritual planting.

1. A Planter, is one instructed into the Mystery of that Art, he has wisdom and skill in planting which others have not; so a Minister of Christ is one God hath taught the Mysteries of the Gospel unto, and hath endowed with Wisdom, Spiritual and Ministerial Gifts, and Graces which others have not. Paul shews when Christ ascended on High he gave Gifts to Men, that is, to fit and qualifie them to be Spiritual Planters, or Preachers of the Gospel; human Learning and Knowledge Why Mini-
sters are
compared to
Planters.
Eph. 4. 8.

Knowledge of the Tongues cannot make Men Ministers of Christ, but they may be Ministers of Man's making only, or be National Ministers, but not be Christ's Ministers: Though the knowledge of the Tongues are very useful to Ministers, and such learning is not to be condemned, provided no stress is laid upon such learning, rendring it absolutely necessary, or that it is sufficient to make Men Ministers of Christ; 'tis a good Handmaid, but a bad Mistress.

Spiritual Preachers must have a regular call.
 2. A Planter must have a Call by the owner of the Vineyard, or be in an orderly way impowered by the chief and great Planter, before he is allowed to Plant in his Vineyard; so every Minister must be called and regularly impowered, or ordained a Pastor or a Planter by the Rules of the Gospel, before he is, or ought to be allowed to Preach and Plant Persons in God's Vineyard. *How shall they Preach except they are sent*; that is, unless they receive a regular call and authority from Christ so to do.

With what Instrument Gospel Planters do their Work.
 3. A Planter must have fit and proper Instruments to do this Work: So Ministers have the Gospel, which is an Instrument of God's Power in the hand of the Spirit, by which they work and Plant Sinners into Christ, and in his Church. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the Power of God to Salvation unto all that Believe, &c.* The Gospel is also called the *Ingraffed Word* which is able to save the Soul; Sinners by it through the Spirit are grafted into Christ, or obtain union with him; it is done instrumentally by the Word Preached, but efficaciously by the Spirit.

Ministers do not know what kind of Plants they plant in God's Vineyard.
 4. A Planter doth not know infallibly the difference there is in Plants, he may think a Plant is of the right Kind, but may be mistaken: So a Minister knowing not the Hearts of Men, may think this and that Person is a true Person, is a true Plant, a sincere Convert; but may be deceived as *Philip was in Simon the Sorcerer, who (it is said) Believed, and was Baptized.*

Everygrafted Plant bears no good Fruit.
 5. A skilfull Planter knows that a wild, ungrafted Tree never bears good Fruit; no, it must be removed and grafted with a better Kind: So Ministers know that an unregenerated Man, who only grows out of the wild Olive Tree, I mean the first Adam, cannot bring forth good Fruit: Every Sinner must therefore be transplanted, by being renewed, and must by the Spirit be grafted into Jesus Christ; and as every Twig a Planter designs to graft, must be cut off with a sharp Knife and presently grafted in the new Stock, so must Sinners by the Word and Spirit (which is sharp as a two edged Sword) be cut off from Sin, the love of this World, &c. and immediately

be grafted into Jesus Christ. *They were* Act. 2. 36 *pricked in the Heart*, this is the Work of the Spirit in Conviction.

6. A Planter observes the proper Season for planting, as when the Ground is prepared and made soft by the Show-ers of Heaven; so do Ministers observe the Season of planting and Sowing the Seed of the Word, even when God hath prepared the Hearts of Sinners, and made their Spirits tender by the Divine Rain.

VII. A Planter doth not only Plant, but also Water. So Ministers do not only Preach for Conviction & Conversion, but also for Consolation, and Building up, that Believers may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. *2 Pet. 3. 18.*

VIII. A Planter greatly rejoices to see his Plants grow, thrive, and bear much Fruit, but he knows this is from God alone. So a Minister rejoiceth greatly to see the Saints (that he hath instrumentally planted in God's Vineyard) to grow in Faith, Love, in Humility, in Knowledge, and in all the fruits of Righteousness, but all the increase of his Labour he says with Paul, is of God; but God gave the increase. *1 Cor. 3. 6.*

So much as to Planters, I shall speak a little farther as touching Plants.

1. Plants must be well rooted that bring forth Fruit; so must Christians be well rooted: *Ye being rooted in Love*, there must be a rooting in Christ, rooted in Faith, rooted in Love, rooting in Humility, rooting in the Doctrine of the Gospel, or else they will be soon plucked up, or blown down by every Wind of Doctrine. *Eph. 3. 17.*

2. Plants must be Pruned and Purged also, tho' this is chiefly God's own and more immediate Work. *Every Branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth that it may bring forth more Fruit.* By Mortification and Sanctification God purges his Saints, he purgeth their Conscience from dead Works. *He purgeth the filth of the Daughters of Sion*: By his Word he purges them, and by his Spirit he purges them all, by the Rod, or by Trials, Losses, and Crosses, and Persecution, he purgeth them also. *John 15. 2.*

3. Some Plants who promised well, prove Barren and good for nothing, so some Spiritual Plants prove naught and barren like the fruitless Fig-tree, they seemed to have much Zeal, Love, and Faith for a little time, but lo, by and by they are offended, and *Wither away*, and come to nothing. *Mat. 13. 21.*

4. Plants that Wither, proving utterly Barren after waiting Three or Four Years, are rooted up or cut down; So such Church Members or Professors, who prove loose, Carnals, and utterly Barren, after

after long Patience, God roots up, or cuts down. *These Three Years I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and found none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground.*
 John 13. 2. Again, it is said, *every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away; and then they being Withered, they are cast into the Fire and burned.*

Secondly, *Why shall every Plant God hath not planted be rooted up.*

Why every plant God hath not planted shall be rooted up.

1. Because they are wild Plants, Plants never transplanted out of the Evil and corrupt Root, I mean the first Adam, but remain Dead in Sin and Trespases, being of the works of the Law, and so remain under the Curse, and being under the Curse, they being not made good Trees cannot bring forth good Fruit.

2. Because all Plants that God hath not planted, have no right to be planted in his Vineyard; the Gospel Church consisting (or ought to consist) only of renewed or regenerate Persons, they are only such God adds to, or planteth in the Gospel Church; true, in the Legal and Typical Church of Israel the Carnal, Seed of Abraham were planted, and had a right of Church Membership, and Privileges as such; but that Church State is dissolved, old things being gone, and all things now are become new, the Gospel being Congregational, ought wholly to consist of such who are made new Creatures.

3. Because they do but *Cumber the Ground*, (as is shewed in the Parable of the Barren Fig-tree) they are prejudicial or injurious to God's Vineyard, and a great reproach and scandal to Religion, exposing the Name of God to contempt, with his Ways and Ordinances; is it not an unbecoming sight to see a Crab-tree grow in a Kings Vineyard, or Bryars and Thorns planted there? would he indure to behold them set and grow up amongst his rich and costly Plants and excellent Flowers, that are of great worth both for pleasure and profit? why these are like Crab-trees, Bryars and Thorns, and therefore 'tis a shame they should be suffered to grow in the Vineyard of the King of Heaven and Earth.

Heb. 6. 6. 8.

4. Because they are good for nothing but for the Fire, or to be burned, being rotten hearted Hypocrites. *The Ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but transgressors shall fall therein.*

Hof. 14. 9.

U S E.

This may inform us what just rebuke such will one Day meet with from God,

who bring in, or plant the carnal Seed of Believers in their pretended Gospel Churches; be sure such Plants, of which the New Testament Congregations do not, nor ought not to consist, are Plants that God never planted, but the carnal Seed of Believers, as such, I mean little Babes, according to the Constitution of the Gospel Church ought not to be admitted as Members thereof; tho' some of the Children of Believers are in the Election of Grace, and of such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven; yet it is not known which of the Children of Believers are Elected to Salvation; besides Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Ordinances of meer positive right, and none but such who do believe, and make a profession of their Faith, being regenerated Persons, ought to be received or admitted to either of those Ordinances, or be Members of the Church of Christ: Faith and Repentance being required of all that ought to be Baptized and Planted in Gospel Congregations, by virtue of Christ's great Commission, and the practice of the Apostolical Churches. Mat. 28. 18, 19.

They must be such that are Dead to Sin, and raised by the operation of God, to walk in newness of Life; all that are to be Baptized ought to have the inward Spiritual Grace, who have the outward Sign or Symbol of it given unto them. See the sim-
 bie now is
 the Ax laid
 to the Root
 of the Trees
 in Book 1.
 Rom. 6. 3, 4.

2. Let Hypocrites (or such Persons who are not sincere) who are planted in Gospel Churches, Tremble, for since God planted them not there, they must and shall in a short time be rooted up.

3. This may also shew what care Ministers and Churches should take about planting People in their Congregations, lest they receive such Persons who are none of the plants of the Lord, nor such that bring Glory to him; but contrariwise, greatly dishonour him, and are a reproach to his Churches, and to his Ways and Ordinances.

But to proceed, to another Proposition.

2. Doct. *All the Plants which God himself hath planted, shall stand and never be rooted up.* This Truth my Brethren is clearly implied in this Similie.

In speaking to this, I shall briefly do to Two things.

1. *Shew what kind of Plants they are that God hath planted.*

2. *Shew why they shall never be rooted up.*

First shew what Plants they be.

1. The Plants God hath planted are truly grafted into Jesus Christ, they are united by the Spirit unto Christ, who is a living Stock; it is one thing my Brethren to be planted into Christ's Vine-
 yard, What kind
 of Persons
 they be that
 are God's
 Plants.

yard, and another thing to be planted or grafted into Christ, who is the true Olive-tree.

See the Parable John 15. 1, 2. opened. Rom. 8. 9.

II. The Plants of God's Planting have the Spirit of God in them, the Spirit is indeed the Bonds of our Union with Christ, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; from hence also they are quickened, they have Life in them, as well as they are united to a living Stock, and not only Life in them, but are Spiritual and Lively also, (all other Plants I shewed you are Dead.)

John 3. 3. 5. 2 Cor. 5. 17.

III. The Plants God hath planted, have holy Habits planted in them, and thus they become good Trees, good Plants, their vitious Habits are rooted out, they have changed Hearts, or are regenerated Persons, or such that are Born again, they are new Creatures, have new Qualities, new Desires, new Affections, and so are Holy and Heavenly Plants; every Grace of the holy Spirit is planted in them, as Faith, Love, Hope, Humility, Patience, Temperance, Sobriety, meekness and Brotherly kindness, and these things render them to be lovely Plants, and Plants that God's own right Hand hath Planted, which shall never be barren nor unfruitful.

2 Pet. 1. 8.

IV. And from hence it appears, they have the root of the matter in them, from whence all their fruit springs up, and grows in them, even all the fruits of Obedience and good Works. *Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in him.* Our Lord shews that the Stony Ground hearers, had not root in them: But Believers have Christ in them, who is the root of the matter, the root of Faith, Love, &c. they are rooted in Christ: But Note from that passage in Job, to censure a godly Man, is a kind of persecution. *Why do you persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my Flesh.* God hath power to Judge and Censure us, he knows our Hearts, but Man doth not; and therefore ought not to pass any rash Judgment, or not judge any good Man's state, as to Censure him as an Hypocrite, tho' many great Afflictions and unusual Tryals, and manifold Infirmities may attend him, yet they may be good Plants, holy Persons in God's sight.

Job. 19. 28.

Mat. 17. 21.

Job 19. 21.

Question, *What is meant by the Root of the Matter?*

This is spoken to the exposition of the Parable of the Sower.

Answer, Christ primarily, as I hinted, is the Root of the matter, Christ, as God is the original Root, and as Mediator, the Root in whom we are planted by the Spirit, yet as Mr. Caryl Notes, habitual Grace may be said also to be the Root of the Matter, or that first Grace that is infused into the Soul, or as others, sincerity the root may be uprightness

of the Heart, before such have the Root of the Matter in them.

Question, *Why is it called a Root, or the Root of the Matter?*

Answer, Because a Root is a hidden thing, it lies deep in the Earth, and out of Sight; so the Spirit and the Habits of Grace are hidden things, and lie out of the sight of Men; we read of the hidden Man of the Heart, our Life is a hidden Life.

Why it is called a Root.

2. A fruitful Root tends to make a fruitful Plant, and greatly feeds and strengthens it: So we being rooted in Christ, born by this Root, springing up out of this Root, we are made fruitful Christians, and obtain strength; it is for want of being rooted in Christ, or want of the habits of Grace, that other Plants are soon rooted up, wither, and come to nothing.

3. 'Tis hard to root up a Tree that hath a deep Root, but yet that may be done; but Believers being rooted in Christ, he is such a deep and hidden Root; none, neither Sin, the World, nor Devil can root up this Root, nor hinder the Sap from feeding those Plants that grow out of this Root.

V. The Plants of God's planting, are full of Heavenly Juice, the Trees of the Lord are full of Sap, the Cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted; they are full of the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge, of Faith, Zeal, &c. they are fruitful Plants. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit.* They are holy Men and Women, they are called Trees of Righteousness, not Carnal, Proud, Covetous, Contentious or Quarrelsome Persons, no, such shew they are not Plants of God's planting; gracious Persons are known by their holy Lives, as Trees are known by the Fruit they bear; *That they may be called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be Glorified.*

John 15. 5.

Isa. 61. 3.

VI. They are Plants that never cease bearing of Fruit, their Fruit fails not, their Faith, their Love, their Zeal, their good Works, their Obedience, their Piety shall continue, and also they shall bring forth fruit in due Season. *And he shall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that bringeth forth his Fruit in his Season; his Leaf shall not Wither &c.* Some bring forth Fruit for a short time, but their Fruit fails, and their very Leaf withers, i. e. they falter in their outward Profession, and cannot keep up in outward Duties of Religion; but the Plants of God's planting, *They shall not see when heat cometh, but her Leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in Years of drought, neither*

Psal. 1. 3.

Jer. 17. 8.

What the Root of the Matter is.

Jer. 17. 8. neither cease from yielding Fruit.

Secondly, *Why shall not the Plants of God be rooted up?*

Why God's
Plants shall
never be
rooted up.

John 15.
16.

1. Because they are ordained to bring forth Fruit; what Man will root up a very fruitful Tree, that always is fruitful; now, as you hear, such Plants are the Plants of God's planting; neither indeed can it be otherwise, by vertue of Christ's Ordination. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and Ordained you, that you should go and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain.* How should such Plants be ever rooted up that are ordained to eternal Life, and also are ordained to bear Fruit, and that their Fruit shall remain.

John 14.
19.

2. Because they are (as you heard) planted into Christ, united by the holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus, and so grow out of the Root and Offspring of David, *Because I live, ye shall live also;* only Christ ever lives, their Root lives, their Head lives, and therefore the Trees, the Plants, that grow out of this Root shall ever live also; and the Members of such a Head must live; for shall the Head live for ever, and the Members Die; abhor the notion that some Men assert; Christ lived on Earth that we might live, he died also that we might live; and rose from the Dead that we might live, and now lives, in Heaven, to intercede for us, that we may live; and therefore none of these Plants can be rooted up, but must live for ever.

Jer. 31.

Rom. 8.
35. 37.

3. Because the love of God is everlasting and unchangeable to all these Plants, nothing can separate us from the Love of Christ, nor from the Love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Besides, (as I hinted) they are Members of Christ's Mystical Body; can he lose a Limb of his Body, a Member of his Body; no certainly, he shall have a perfect Body, and therefore they cannot be rooted up.

John 10.

28, 29, 30.

4. Because none can pluck them up, no Enemy can root them up, as God will not, so Sin, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil cannot. *I give them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither can any pluck them out of my Hand.—My Father that gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand—I and my Father are one.* Doth the Father love them with an eternal Love, and hath Christ bought them, redeemed them with his own Blood, and hath the Spirit renewed and sanctified them, and shall they after all this be rooted up? will God suffer Sin to do it, or Satan to do it? No sure, if they Sin, they have an Advocate with the

John 2.

2.
Heb. 8. 12.

Father; their Sins are satisfied for, and are forgiven for ever.

5. The Prayer and Intercession of Christ prevents their being utterly rooted up. *I have Prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not.* Our Lord hath Prayed that all that the Father gave him, may be where he is, &c. and he hath undertaken also to bring them all to Heaven, and must lose not one; therefore they cannot be rooted up, and finally perish.

See the Pa-
rable of the
Sower.
Mat. 13.
opened in the
1. Book.

APPLICATION.

1. I infer, that no Doctrine is more comfortable than the Doctrine of final perseverance: See, you that are Believers, that you are not drawn away from the Belief thereof by Men of dark minds, who understand little of the nature of the Covenant, of the Love of God, nor of the Suretyship of Jesus Christ.

Exhort. But O see you shew forth the Praises of this God, who with his own Hand hath planted you in a fruitful Hill.

Trial, Examine your selves lest you should not be Plants that our Heavenly Father hath planted.

That you may not be deceived, have you received the holy Spirit.

1. It is a Soul illuminating Spirit, what light have you?

2. 'Tis a Soul humbling Spirit.

3. 'Tis a Grace implanting Spirit.

4. 'Tis a Soul assimilating Spirit, it forms the Image of God in the Soul.

5. 'Tis a Soul sanctifying, and Sin mortifying Spirit.

6. 'Tis a Soul rooting, and a Soul establishing Spirit.

Comfort to Believers, or to these blessed Plants, my Brethren, the Corruptions of our own Hearts cannot, shall not root us up; Satan by his Temptations cannot root us up; Poverty, Necessity, Reproaches, nor Persecution cannot

Rom. 8.
38, 39.

root us up; Deceivers nor Delusions cannot root us up; *This our Lord shews is impossible, for if it was, they would deceive even the very Elect.* The Habit of Grace can never be lost; tho' you fall, yet you shall rise again, notwithstanding your Fears, your Doubts and deceitful Hearts, and the Snares of the World; you shall Stand: I will conclude with the Words of the Psalmist, *The righteous shall flourish like the Palm-tree; he shall grow like the Cedar in Lebanon, those that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God; they shall still*

Mat. 24.

Psal. 92.

12, 13, 14,

15.

still bring forth Fruit in old Age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to shew that the Lord is upright, he is our Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

The Parable of the unjust Steward.

S E R M O N X I.

LUKE 16. 1, 2, 3. &c.

And he said unto his Disciples, there was a certain rich Man which had a Steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his Goods. Vers. 1.

And he said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy Stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer Steward. Vers. 2. &c.

THE main Scope of this Parable only is to be attended to, or what our Saviour chiefly designed hereby; many Ungodly and Atheistical Persons have vilified our Saviour, and contemned the holy Gospel, from what is said by our Lord, in commending the unjust Steward, through their Ignorance, not considering for what he commended him. Our Annotators say that Hierom thought this a very obscure Parable, and that Julian the Apostate, and some of the Heathen Philosophers; from hence cast reproach upon our blessed Lord and his holy Doctrine, as if he commended an unjust action of a wicked Man.

Parables my Brethren (I have often told you) have their disparities, our Lord doth not commend the unjust Steward for his injustice (whom he brands with the odious Character of an unjust Steward, in which no doubt he refers to his last acts of injustice as well as to any of his former acts) but for his care, or great Wisdom in providing for himself for the future time, when put out of his Stewardship.

In speaking to this Parable I shall

1. Shew the chief design of it, and wherein it is full of instruction unto us.
2. Shew the divers disparities that are therein.

3. Open the Parts thereof, and also what follows about what our Lord speaks, concerning the Mammon of unrighteousness.

1. One chief thing (as I hinted) I conceived is to Shew, that it is part of great wisdom in Men to provide for the time to come, or for an endless eternity, by the example of the unjust Steward, who took care to provide for his future subsistence (when turned out of his Stewardship) whilst he was in this World. The design or Scope of the Parable.

2. To shew that his Disciples and all Men are but Stewards of all the good things they have, whether they are Spirituals or Temporals.

3. And to let us also know that we must all be called to give an account of our Stewardship, and if we are unfaithful, we shall have a sad account to give one Day.

4. Moreover from what follows in this Chapter, our Lord shews what a great Duty it is to improve Worldly riches to our own profit, or to the advantage of our Souls, and that such who are unfaithful in and about a wise Improvement of such things (which are the less) should God give them true riches, they would be unfaithful in and about them things also which are the greater.

Secondly, I shall shew you, that there are several great disparities, so that this Parable much differs from several others.

1. There is a great disparity in that, the Lord & his Steward, had distinct, particular or separate Interests to carry on; the Lord's interest was one, and his Steward's another; and whilst the Steward sought to advance his own interest, he injured his Master, or prejudiced his; for whilst he made use of his Master's Goods for his own Profit, he could not in so doing add to his Master's advantage, but the contrary. Disparities in this Parable.

But the Lord Jesus, and all his Servants have but one Spiritual Interest, to manage or carry on in the World; and whatsoever we do, or can do truly tending to enrich our Souls, doth also tend to advance Christ's Interest and his Glory; and that which tends not to Christ's Honour, or to the advancement of his Interest,

terest, cannot tend to enrich us, but rather to undo and ruin our Souls.

2. The Men of this World many times get Riches and grow great in an unjust and unrighteous way (which our Lord here condemns) but no Person can get true Spiritual riches in an unjust way, or by using any unlawful Courses: Some are overmuch righteous, denying themselves of the use of God's good Creatures, and neglecting the Body, under a pretence of Righteousness and Religion, and this is to seek to be Spiritually rich in an undue or unlawful way, as the *Papists* Vow a single Life, and their *Fryars* begg and go barefoot, &c. Moreover, in our time there arose a Sect that lived upon Herbs and Roots, and would wear no *Woollen Garments*, nor Hats, unless made of Straw, and all under the shew of Righteousness, Religion, and Self-denial. But these things being but a piece of voluntary Humility, and not Commanded of God, is the ready way to be come miserable for ever, rather than to be truly Spiritually rich, and can no ways tend to make Men truly happy.

4. The Friends that the unjust Steward made for himself, was by his own craftiness, and in an unrighteous way meriting their friendship, but no Man can any way, no, not by the highest acts of Justice or Mercy, merit any thing of God, or deserve his Love and Favour, or procure his Friendship, for all we are, and have is the Lords.

5. Nor can any Friend which a wicked Man can obtain, or make for himself, receive him (when he fails or Dies) into everlasting Habitation: But he that obtains God to be his Friend, and Christ to be his Friend, when he fails, they will receive them into an everlasting Habitation or dwelling place in Heaven, so that in these respects consisteth vast disparities.

Thirdly, *I shall open some of the chief parts of this Parable that seems most obscure.*

And the Lord commended the unjust Steward because he had done wisely.

Some think these words refer to the Lord of the unjust Steward, who when he heard how craftily his Servant had acted for himself, commended him; but certainly the words refer to our blessed Lord, he spake these words and commended him; not for his Injustice, or for defrauding his Master, no, (as was hinted) for that act he utterly condemned him by calling him an *unjust Steward*; but for his taking care in providing for a time to come, when turned out of his Stewardship, or when he failed and foresaw a time of need would come, and he being not brought up to hard labour, could

not Dig, and so *Beg* was ashamed; but would notwithstanding provide for a future time of wants and straits; & to provide for such a time he commended him; but the way he took to do it, he condemned, saying, *the Children of this World*, &c. that is Earthly Men, who regard not Eternity, or wicked Men, such as this unjust Steward was, who make no provision for their Souls, *are Wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light*; that is, than the Children of God, who are called *the Children of the Day*, or of the Light, being Born from above, and called out of Darkness into marvellous Light.

How Wiser? our Lord shews, *i. e. in their Generation*, that is in their business or about Earthly things, they are more Wise (as if our Lord should say) in providing for the Body, or how to live in this World, than the Children of Light are to project ways, and so endeavour to promote the Glory of God, and the profit and comfort of their own Souls.

And I say unto you, make to your selves Friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness.

1. By Mammon of unrighteousness, (I conceive) is meant Worldly Riches, called unrighteous Mammon, because of those manifold Evils, Snares and Temptations they expose Men unto that have them.

Make to your selves Friends of &c.

The Friends who we are bid to make unto our selves, are such (it appears) that are able when we fail, to receive us into everlasting Habitation; and evident it is, that none can do that, but the *Glorious Three in One*, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or ever adorable Trinity.

When ye fail, &c. that is, when ye Die, for it is then when all God's faithful Servants are received into that eternal dwelling-place above.

But the difficulty seems to lie in these Words, *i. e. make unto your selves Friends*. Can any make God and Jesus Christ their Friends? no, not that any can merit his friendship, or by doing any thing to deserve such friendship, that's impossible, because *when we have done all we can do, we are unprofitable Servants*. Besides, by bestowing our Earthly Goods or Treasure on the poor, we do but give that which is our Lord's own, we are but Stewards of all things we have, and therefore cannot oblige God, or make him our Friend thereby, *And of thine own have we given thee*. But nevertheless in distributing of Earthly riches to the poor Saints, or to further and promote the Interest

The parts opened.

What Friends they are we make by worldly riches.

1 Chro. 29. 24.

Luke 18.
29, 30.

Interest of Christ our great Master, God declares how well he accepts it at our hands, and it is so well pleasing to the blessed Jesus, and to the holy Spirit, that they will shew themselves our Friends in the time of our necessity, even as our Lord shews that such who lose all for his sake, or part with all they have in Love to him, that such shall have an *Hundred fold in this World, and in the World to come everlasting Life*. Tho' not in *Specie*, yet in *Worth or Value*; that which is an *Hundred fold* better than what we part with; and this as an act of Friendship, or an act of Love and infinite Kindness, tho' not of Merit: God hath promised to reward all the Services of his People, tho' they are not Rewards of Debt, but of Grace.

Christ calls them that do the Will of his Father, his *Brother*, his *Sister* and *Mother*, not that we can make him to esteem us as his Friends and dear Relations, by procuring such Favours as one Man may procure or purchase kindnesses of another, but only to shew it is as acceptable to him as if we could deserve at his Hand: So that one great design of our Saviour in this Parable, is to press his Disciples to Charity, by shewing that nothing they lay out, or part with of their Substance, will redound to such advantage and profit to them, as what they part with for Christ's sake, either to the Poor or for the promoting his Interest in this World.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful in much, &c. Ver. 10.

What is
meant by be-
ing faithful
in the least,
&c.

The Riches of this World are the least of our Master's Goods, and such that are not faithful in distributing them as God requires, our Lord shews will not be faithful in improving of Spiritual Gifts and Endowments; such that neglect his Poor, or will not improve their external Talent of Worldly Riches, to the Glory of God, and good of his Church and People, will not improve their time, and the opportunities the Lord gives them in his Service and holy Worship, in order to his Honour, the credit of Religion, and their own Spiritual profit, Peace and Comfort, or that he who loves not his Brother whom he sees daily, loves not God whom he sees not.

And he that is unjust in the least, is unjust in much.

Tho' among Men it be not universally so, yet commonly it is so, and all Men conclude that he who is unjust in small matters, will be so in greater things were they intrusted in his hand; and who will trust him with great things, that proves unfaithful in small things; therefore he that is unfaithful to Men, or

to his poor Brother, will not be faithful to God in discharge of his Duty in the great things of his Worship, Name and Glory, by improving those Gifts or Spiritual Talents received.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true Riches? ^{What meant by true Riches.}

1. Unrighteous Mammon is here opposed to the *true Riches*: Some think by true Riches is meant the Gospel and the Ministration of it, which Christ will not commit to Men, who are not faithful in distributing of their Earthly Riches to those great ends God hath Commanded, or that will be only for themselves, or love themselves, or not regard the Church of God, nor to feed the Bellies of the Poor, will Christ commit the Treasure of the Gospel and care of the Souls of his People unto such? no sure, for if they improve not Worldly Riches that way he has appointed, who can think they will be faithful and full of thought about the improvement of the true Riches, and in taking care of the Souls of his People.

But others rather think by the true Riches, our Saviour means special and effectual Grace, which say they, is of all the *true Riches*; and if taken so, then it teacheth this truth, that God is justified, in the denying of his special Grace to those who do not make use, or duly improve those common Gifts and Graces they are intrusted with, and so the Damnation of Men will be just, because they do not make use of that Light, Gifts, Knowledge and Abilities they have received of God: Our Annotators seem to take it thus; but not as if God will try all Men about the improvement of common Grace, before he will give special, as some corrupt Persons have imagined; and hath obliged himself to give special Grace to all them that faithfully improve common Gifts, Grace and Abilities, and that the only cause why some have not the one, is because they improve not the other; as if Grace were procured by natural Improvements, or Grace depended upon Nature or God's Will, upon the will and the faithfulness of the Will of the Creature; this Error I have in opening other Parables sufficiently detected.

How many great Sinners hath God suddenly, as an act of sovereign Grace, effectually called, who never improved any of those common Favours and Abilities God intrusted them with: Nothing that Sinners can do, can oblige God; or be a motive to him to give his special Grace to them, no, he only acts from his own Love and sovereign Pleasure, in giving

giving himself and his Son unto poor Sinners. I shall leave my Reader to take which Sense of these he best approves; perhaps there may be another Sense given, that differs from both these.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, who shall give you that which is your own, Verse 12. Some read, If you have not been faithful in things that are without you, which are little, compared with things that are within you.

The Riches
of this
World are
not a Godly
Person's own,
but another
Man's.

But I conceive our Lord in these Words,

1. Shews that the Riches of this World are not ours, or not his Disciples; they are more properly another Man's, that is the Earthly Man's, they are his Riches, his Portion; the Riches of this World were not purchased for the Saints, nor promised to them as part of their Inheritance; no, but the True Riches, Spiritual Riches and Righteousness, and if God gives us some of the Earthly Man's Portion, which is not our own proper Riches, and we are unfaithful in Improving that; what ground have we to expect God will give us more and more of our own Riches, i. e. more Faith, Knowledge, Peace and Joy in believing, tho' purchased for us; it is no doubt mentioned here as a powerful argument or motive to distribute freely, or plentifully part with our Worldly Riches to the uses God calls for.

That which is another Man's.

2. It may refer to the Poor; for Wealth put into the hands of Rich Saints is the Poor's; (1.) they are Christ's Stewards, into whose hands he hath put all the Relief he designs for his poor Members, as the Proverb is, *The Poor Man's Belly is the Rich Man's Barn*. Rich Men must not say their Gold and Silver is their own, no it is Christ's poor, they by his Ordination have right to it.

2. Riches for the sake of the Poor are given to them that have them; our Lord foreseeing many of his People would be poor, and not have to supply their own necessities, puts a supply for them of what they need into this Brother or that Sister's hand, that so they may have what they need. (3.) Our Lord Commands the Rich to hand out of what he hath intrusted them with unto the Poor, and tells them also, they are but his Stewards, and that he will call them ere long to give up their accounts, and thus Worldly riches in the hands of Christ's Stewards, may be said to be other Mens, and not that which is their own.

Now having according to the small Light received, opened what seems difficult in this Parable, I shall proceed to take notice of one or two Propositions

from the Scope or chief Design of our Lord herein.

1. Doct. That the Servants of Christ are but Stewards of all the good things that are in their hands, whether they be Temporals or Spirituals, which they ought to improve; and shall be called to give an account of their Stewardship.

I shall very briefly in speaking to this Truth.

1. Shew what things they are intrusted with that are not their own.

2. Shew why they ought with care to improve whatsoever they are intrusted with.

1. All Earthly good things as Riches, Health, Time, Parts, Opportunities or any outward accommodation, Saints are Stewards of; and must improve to the Glory of God, their own good and the profit of others. *Both Riches and Honours come of thee.* These are our Lord's Goods, of which you are Stewards, and of which must give account. *1. Chro. 29. 12.*

2. All Spiritual Goods, viz. the Gospel and Ministration thereof, Spiritual Knowledge, Gifts, grace the Worship of God, and his Ordinances, Promises, providences, and care of God's holy Temple or Vineyard; all these things we are intrusted with, and must be accountable to Christ for, as his Stewards.

2y. Why must we carefully improve all things that are in our hands.

And first of Earthly things.

1. Because whatsoever we have put into our hand, (1) Of Temporal good things, it is to advance the Honour of our great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and to refresh, comfort, and support the whole household where we are placed; like as Pharaoh made Joseph the Steward of his House to Feed them all with Bread, or to hand it unto them.

2. Because we have (as I said before) nothing that is our own, but it is our Lord's Goods. *The Gold and Silver are mine saith the Lord; therefore I will return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and will recover my Wooll and my Flax.* *Hof. 2. 9. All Earthly things we have, is the Lord's, 'tis his Gold, &c.*

See here how the Lord lays claim to all outward good things, and threatens his People to take what he had put into their hands of these things, because they kept back from his use through Covetousness, what they ought to have given, may be they let his Poor, or Ministers want what was necessary for them.

3. Because (as you have heard) if we are not faithful in the least, it may stop the hand of Christ from giving the greater things to us.

4. It will be otherwise a wrong and great

great injustice to the Poor, or to such for the sakes of whom they that are Rich are intrusted with Earthly Wealth, or outward good things, in withholding that which is theirs by Christ's appointment, from them; and so a clear demonstration of unfaithfulness both to God and Man; and it may provoke God to take away from them what they have, or to blast them in their Trades and Callings, or outward Substance.

An account must be given to Christ what care we have taken of his Church, of his Gospel, his Poor, and his Ministers.

5. Because we must in a short time be called to give an account of our Stewardship about this matter, we must expect to hear Christ say what have you done with my Gold and Silver, my Corn, my Wooll and my Flax? How is it that my Poor have wanted Bread and Cloths, and my Ministers have been neglected and put to many great straits, and forced to run into Debt to buy them necessities to support their Families? and my Church has been in Debt, and my Interest hath been not regarded, but sinks in your hands, for want of such supplies of Money that was necessary; whereas I put enough into your hands to make the Lives of my Ministers; and my Poor, comfortable to them, and that also whereby young Men I gifted to Preach, might have been encouraged and improved to the advancement of my Glory, and spreading of my Gospel in Dark parts of the Nation where you lived? how is it that you have Converted my Goods to your own proper use, and only taken care of your own House and your Children, and Feed and Cloth them richly, and left the rest of your Substance to your Babes, and regarded not those great ends for which I put so much Riches or Earthly things in your hands? May we not expect Christ will charge some of his Stewards after this manner, and Conviſt them of unfaithfulness, when he calls them away by Death to give an account of their Stewardship?

Because if these good things be not rightly and faithfully improved as Christ commandeth, his Poor, and his Ministers also, may be exposed to great Temptations, and their Souls born down and sorely discouraged; and Satan may get advantages against them, for many Snares and Dangers attend Poverty or outward Want; moreover the Name of God and Religion may also thereby be exposed to the Contempt of the World; who can believe we are the People of God, when they cannot see that Love to one another among them, which always is the Character of such that are true Christians? or how should they think that we believe the way we are in, is the true Way and Worship of God; whereas the very Heathen and Papists shew more Zeal in supporting

their Idolatry, Superstitious and false Churches, than we shew to support the Gospel, the Truths of God, and the true Church? Besides, if the Poor be not Fed by us, they may be starved and perish, who should provide for them but we? shall we send the Children of Sion to others to be Fed, or matter not what becomes of them? if so, what a sad account shall we have to give at the last Day.

Secondly, We must also improve all Spiritual things which we have received, or Christ hath put into our hands.

1. The Gospel and the Ministration thereof, because it is given to the end that we may profit thereby. (2.) And it is Christ's chiefest Treasure, and that which he intrusteth very few with. (3.) And if not improved, he may take it away from us, as he hath formerly from others. (4.) When that goes, God goes, Christ goes, and all Good goes, and all Evil will come in.

2. Spiritual Gifts, Knowledge and Ministerial Gifts, because given for the use and profit of the Church, and they that have them, are but Stewards of them, which they are Commanded to improve.

As every Man hath received the Gift, even so let them Minister one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Graces of God. 1 Pet. 4. 10. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8.

(3.) All the Graces of the Spirit are also to be Improved and Daily increased by exercise. And (1.) Because Christ expects his own with increase. And also (2.) because thereby we do bring Glory to him. (3.) And shall receive eternal advantage to our own Souls thereby also.

U S E.

O get your accounts ready, you know not but this Night Christ may say, Give an account of thy Stewardship, thou mayest not be any longer Steward.

SERMON XII.

LUKE 16. 8.

And the Lord commended the unjust Steward because he had done Wisely, for the Children of this World are in their Generation Wiser than the Children of Light.

YOU have heard that our blessed Saviour did not commend him for his

For what it
was that
Christ com-
mended the
unjust Ste-
ward.

his doing *unjustly*, but for his thoughtfulness about his future State, or in providing for himself for the time to come; tho' not the manner he took in doing of it: He was told of his being put out of his Stewardship; and foreseeing a time of great straits and want might soon overtake him, he therefore thought timely how to prevent perishing at such a time, and it was for this our Lord commended him, saying, *The Children of this World are Wiser in their generation than the Children of Light.* From hence Note.

1. Doct. *Some wicked Men are more Wise how to provide for themselves, or in contriving how to live in this World, than the Saints and People of God are to contrive and seek ways how to advance the Glory of God, and their own Spiritual Interest and Comfort here, and happiness in the World to come.*

Wherein the
Children of
this World
are said to
be Wise.

O how subtle and crafty are the Children of this World, what ways will they contrive to enrich themselves? or to prevent Want, Poverty and extremity, they will not leave one Stone unturned, if one way fails them, they Study another; and think no time, no pains, nor any danger or difficulties too great to enrich themselves, or to prevent perishing for want of Bread, and other Earthly things, they see an absolute necessity of while they are here; (for the things of Eternity, or of another World, they mind not) but Earthly things they will have, tho' it be by Cheating or base and horrid injustice; but (saith our *Annotations*) that which was *Knavery* in this *unjust Steward*, is honest enough in those who are Stewards of our Heavenly Lord's Goods, for no Man can improve his Parts, his Riches, his Honour, his Health, his Time, or his Abilities, or his whole Life to his own true Spiritual advantage; but in so doing, he advanceth the real Interest and Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Interest being not divided, or Two, but only One and the same (as I shewed you.)

Were we *my Brethren* as Wise for our Souls and Internal profit, as the Men of this World are for their Bodies and External profit, what rare Christians should we be? Had we but as many lawful Projects, and spent as many serious Thoughts, or took as much Time, and spent as great Pains to increase our true Substance, and to grow and increase in Grace, and in providing for a Time of Need, as they have Projects and Thoughts how to get the World, and spend their Time and Strength in providing for themselves here; Religion would flourish at ano-

The Men of
the World in
their way,
out do the
Children of
God in their
Ways.

ther manner than now it doth in our hands, but they are Wiser in their Way and Generation than we are in ours: How few devise Ways, study and spend their Time and Strength to grow Spiritually Rich; and for our failing herein, we arrive to no greater Strength in Faith, Love, Joy, Peace and Comfort, and likeness unto Christ; whose *Meat and Drink, and whole Business* John 4. 34. *was to do the Will of his Father, and to finish his Work.*

But to proceed to another Proposition.

2. Doct. *That it is Part of true Wisdom, and highly commendable, for a Man with the greatest care and thoughtfulness to provide for hereafter, or for the future Time, when he fails or must Die, and for an endless Eternity.* This is the main thing I humbly conceive that our blessed Lord would instruct us in by this Parable: And in speaking to this point of Doctrine, I shall

1. Shew how this appears to be such great Wisdom, and is so commendable a thing.

2. Shew what future Times it is such Wisdom to provide for.

3. Shew wherein this wise and prudent Care and endeavour in providing for the future Time doth consist.

Now to demonstrate it is part of great Wisdom to provide for the future Time, appears (1.) by the care and practice of all Wise, Rational Men. (2.) By the care and labour of irrational, or meer animal Creatures.

1. All Rational Men look upon it a great point or part of Wisdom to provide for themselves against a Time of need, or for the future Time, and condemn such for Fools who do not thus do; nay, and this is also the Counsel that all Wise Parents give to their Children, viz. O think of the time to come (say they) how to live in the World hereafter, or another Day; be content with mean things now, or to endure a hard Apprentiship, or venture to go into another Land; tho' you are exposed to many Dangers, if you have a fair prospect that it will raise your estate in the World, and be for your future well-being so long as you live on the Earth; nay, how oft do Parents send this or that Son to India, with hopes of getting Riches, and to provide and lay up Wealth against the future time; so that it appears from the general and universal Practice of all Men, to be a great part of Wisdom to provide for a Time to come, and that it is very commendable; and such who take

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take no care in this respect, but only for the present Time, are Laught to Scorn, as being meer Fools, or such as want common Reason.

Now if it be such Wisdom to provide for the Body for the time to come, how much more Wisdom is it to provide for the future well-being of the Immortal Soul? Or if it be great Wisdom to provide for our future Days on Earth, that are so few and uncertain, how much greater Wisdom is it to provide for an endless Eternity?

2. Every Man thinks that it is his main business in Health to provide for Sickness; and in Summer to provide and lay up for Winter, and in Youth to provide and lay up against old Age; and to do these things is really Wisdom, and very commendable; and if it be so, what Wisdom is it to Provide while Health and Strength lasteth; for a Sick Bed, nay a Death Bed; and whilst the Summer or Day of Grace lasts, to provide for such a Winter that may come, when all hopes of gathering will fail; and in Youth to remember no time is so proper, nor more acceptable to God, as to fall in Love with Christ, Esponse him, for so they will be provided for ever.

II. Nay poor *Irrationals*, or meer *Animal Creatures*, by an instinct of Nature provide for the Winter, or future time.

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Also the *Ant* or *Pismire*, a very small and contemptible Creature to look upon, yet how Wise are they in this respect, even to such a degree, that *Solomon* (by the Spirit) sends

lothful Persons to learn Wisdom of them. Go to the *Ant* thou Sluggard, consider her Ways, and be Wise, which *Prov. 6. 6.* having no Guide, Overseer, nor Ruler, provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harvest.

Having no Guide, no Overseer, intimating that as Man is a rational Creature, and so endowed with much Wisdom, which the *Ant* hath not, so also he hath a Guide, viz. the Word of God, and also God affords him his Ministers to be his Overseers, to Excite, Stir up, and warn to Holy diligence; for to provide for the future Time: And yet for all this, the poor *Ant* acts more wisely than Multitudes of Men and Women, for they neither regard the reproofs from this Silly Animal, nor the warnings and checks of their own Consciences, nor the Daily warnings given by God in the Ministration of his Word, and the loud *Alarms* of his Rod and impending Judgments; but go on, and think not, or at least provide not for the time to come.

III. This appears to be a Piece or Point of great Wisdom, because God himself even bewails the Folly of his People of old upon this respect, and wisheth they had more Wisdom. O that they were Wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End. How doth the Holy God by these expressions commend the Wisdom I am speaking of; it appears that Men do not understand what Wisdom consisteth in this matter, if they did, they would consider it; lay it to Heart, or ponder it more seriously in their Hearts, and take more care than they do; I know some think the Lord wisheth that they would consider the state that his People *Israel* would be in through their Sin, in the latter end of the World; suppose he doth partly refer to that, yet much more, because they provided not for the eternal happiness of their precious and never dying Souls, or what was like to befall them to Eternity.

IV. It must needs be great Wisdom to provide for the future well-being of our Souls, because all that were ever esteemed to be Wise Persons, before, or above all other things preferred this matter; all the holy Patriarchs and Godly Men of old, confessed themselves *Pilgrims* on Earth, they were Dead to this World, they sought another Country, that is an Heavenly, they knew this was not their Rest, and hence *Moses* contemned all the Glory of *Egypt*, and of *Pharaoh's* Court; choosing rather

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For what it was that Christ commended the unjust Steward.

his doing unjustly, but for his thoughtfulness about his future State, or in providing for himself for the time to come; tho' not the manner he took in doing of it: He was told of his being put out of his Stewardship; and foreseeing a time of great straits and want might soon overtake him, he therefore thought timely how to prevent perishing at such a time, and it was for this our Lord commended him, saying, *The Children of this World are Wiser in their generation than the Children of Light.* From hence Note.

1. Doct. *Some wicked Men are more Wise how to provide for themselves, or in contriving how to live in this World, than the Saints and People of God are to contrive and seek ways how to advance the Glory of God, and their own Spiritual Interest and Comfort here, and happiness in the World to come.*

Wherein the Children of this World are said to be Wise.

O how subtle and crafty are the Children of this World, what ways will they contrive to enrich themselves? or to prevent Want, Poverty and extremity, they will not leave one Stone unturned, if one way fails them, they Study another; and think no time, no pains, nor any danger or difficulties too great to enrich themselves, or to prevent perishing for want of Bread, and other Earthly things, they see an absolute necessity of while they are here, (for the things of Eternity, or of another World, they mind not) but Earthly things they will have, tho' it be by Cheating or base and horrid injustice; but (saith our *Annotations*) that which was *Knavery* in this unjust Steward, is honest enough in those who are Stewards of our Heavenly Lord's Goods, for no Man can improve his Parts, his Riches, his Honour, his Health, his Time, or his Abilities, or his whole Life to his own true Spiritual advantage; but in so doing, he advanceth the real Interest and Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Interest being not divided, or Two, but only One and the same (as I shewed you.)

Were we *my Brethren* as Wise for our Souls and Internal profit, as the Men of this World are for their Bodies and External profit, what rare Christians should we be? Had we but as many lawful Projects, and spent as many serious Thoughts, or took as much Time, and spent as great Pains to increase our true Substance, and to grow and increase in Grace, and in providing for a Time of Need, as they have Projects and Thoughts how to get the World, and spend their Time and Strength in providing for themselves here; Religion would flourish at ano-

ther manner than now it doth in our hands, but they are Wiser in their Way and Generation than we are in ours: How few devise Ways, study and spend their Time and Strength to grow Spiritually Rich; and for our failing herein, we arrive to no greater Strength in Faith, Love, Joy, Peace and Comfort, and likeness unto Christ; whose *Meat and Drink, and whole Business* John 4. 34. *was to do the Will of his Father, and to finish his Work.*

But to proceed to another Proposition.

2. Doct. *That it is Part of true Wisdom, and highly commendable, for a Man with the greatest care and thoughtfulness to provide for hereafter, or for the future Time, when he fails or must Die, and for an endless Eternity.* This is the main thing I humbly conceive that our blessed Lord would instruct us in by this Parable: And in speaking to this point of Doctrine, I shall

1. Shew how this appears to be such great Wisdom, and is so commendable a thing.

2. Shew what future Times it is such Wisdom to provide for.

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Heb. 11. 25. to suffer afflictions with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of Sin for a Season; esteeming the Reproach of Christ

Verse 26.

greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompence of Reward; it was not his present state in this world, but his future state and happiness that was in his Eye; and to this purpose our Apostle speaks also, *While we look not on things that are seen, but on things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are Temporal, but the things that are not seen, are Eternal.* We regard not (as if he should say) present things, Earthly things, our Eyes, or our Hearts are set upon future things; things to come, those things that are above, or on Eternal things: Why, now if these were the wisest Men that ever lived, and their chiefest Wisdom lay in this, in that they set their Hearts upon God, and on Eternal enjoyment of him in Heaven, and parted with all things here, to have that future Portion; then this is one great, nay the chiefest Point of true Spiritual Wisdom; therefore nothing is more evident than this, or to provide for an endless Eternity is our greatest Wisdom.

V. Because there is no avoiding our entering into an endless state of Joy, or Sorrow; the unavoidableness of all Mens failing; I mean Dying and passing into a future State, shews that this is a point of the chiefest Wisdom.

When you fail they may receive you, &c. After a short time you must fail, shall Die, it is impossible to prevent it; and therefore it was their Wisdom to provide against that Time. Should a Rich Man be told of a certain truth that in a very short time he should Fail in the World, (or as it is called, Break,) and be turned out of all he hath, sure he would be full of Thoughts how he should live in after Times; it would put him upon thoughtfulness for the time to come: Why Sirs, I am come this Day to tell you every one, Young and Old, Rich and Poor, that after a very short time you will all Fail, there is no avoiding it; you that are Rich, your riches will fail; and you that are Strong and in Health, your strength and health will fail; and you that think you are Wise, your wisdom will fail; and you that are Beautiful, your beauty will fail; and you that have the means of Grace, the means of Grace will fail; and you that have nothing but false hopes of Heaven, your hopes will fail, and be like the Spiders Web; and you that live now, and are brisk and lively, your Life will fail: And is it not then your chiefest Wisdom to la-

bour for such Friends that will not fail, or get an Interest in Christ, and have your accounts to give up with Joy, that you may be happy at Death, and for ever.

VI. Because if the worth of the Soul far exceeds in worth the Body, and all things in this World, then it must be our greatest Wisdom to provide for our Souls before all things: What hath God the Father done, and Christ done for our Souls? and shall we take no care of them, but live as if we had no Immortal Souls, but were only animal Creatures.

VII. Because God from all Eternity studied the future good, sought the future Good, and provided for the future good of our Souls and Bodies for ever: The early Care God hath taken, and the wonderful Love he hath shewed, that we might be happy for ever; together with what Christ had done and suffered to save us from future Wrath, and to prepare a place of future Glory for us, should be a mighty argument or motive to stir us up Wisely to provide for our selves to all Eternity, in improving the means God directs us to, to so great an end: God from all Eternity thought of the future state of poor Mankind, whom he foresaw would fall, and how did his Wisdom work or contrive to make us again and for ever happy in the other World.

VIII. Consider how soon either you or I, or any in this Congregation may fail, how soon may the Youngest here like a Flower Fade away; it may be this Year, this Month, this Week, nay, this Night; as God spake to the Rich Man in the Gospel. *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee, and then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided.* Luke 12²⁰.

IX. If you are not provided for your future State, consider how dismal at Death your state will be; is it not the highest Wisdom to prevent or seek to escape the greatest Evil, and be possessed of the greatest Good? what is worse, than God's future Wrath, or that Wrath to come? or what is better, than the Glory that shall when Christ comes, be revealed? *Their state at Death dismal, who are not provided for Eternity.*

X. Consider that God hath found out a way to make us happy for ever, and observe what Promises he hath made to such, who before all things seek the Kingdom of Heaven, and his Righteousness;

teousness; if there was no hope, no way to escape eternal Vengeance, this would make a Man desperate, or else fall under utter Despair, and say with them of old, *but there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.*

XII. Lastly, how have many Thousands bewailed their great Folly in not providing for the Time to come, until it was too late; how have some cryed out, when Death approached, for one Year longer, nay, for one Month; but when that would not be granted, for *one Week*, nay, for *one Day*, O think of this, Now, now whilst it is called to Day.

Secondly, *What future time is it such Wisdom to provide for?*

What future Times we should provide for.

1. Against that Time, when the means of Grace may fail, or all provision for the future Time may utterly Cease, or be Cut off, or our understanding fail; God hath deprived many of their Reason; indeed some Sin it away, and act more like Brutes than Rational Creatures; also 'tis to provide before the time comes that the spirit of God will strive with you no more, or God gives you up to hardness of Heart, to blindness of Mind, and to a Seared Conscience, or before the evil Days come, and Sorrow and Anguish come upon you.

2. The Hour of Death, this is the future Time no doubt our Lord refers to in those Words, *When you fail, &c. no escaping Death, there is no discharge in that War.* And Death (may as you have heard) be near, and Woe to him it comes upon before he is provided for it, not having got a sure and certain Interest in Jesus Christ.

3. The dreadful Day of Judgment, *We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to receive the things done in this Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be Good or Bad.*

They that are prepared to Die, are fitted for the dreadful Day of Judgement; but they that Die in their Sins, or are miserable at Death, will be more miserable at that Day, for then Body and Soul, both shall be cast into Hell.

Thirdly, *The last thing that was proposed, was to shew you wherein a Wise and Prudent care to provide for the future time, doth consist.*

1. We ought to think of our future State, into which we shall, and must pass, when the Soul shall be separated from the Body; it seems it is great Wisdom to Consider, to think upon, or to Ponder this matter; let us think of Death and Eternity every Day. (1.) Think of the certainty of a future state of Joy or Sorrow. (2.) The nearness of it, or how soon we may be in Eternity; we know not what a Day may bring forth; many of you that hear me this Day, may soon see what it is, to be or not to be provided for Death.

2ly. If you would be provided, or would know wherein this Wisdom doth consist; Consider the necessity of your knowing Christ, or of being United to him by Faith, for without you truly Believe in Jesus Christ, you cannot be prepared for the Time to come. *He that Believeth not, shall be Damned.*

Mark. 16. 16.

Nay, *He that Believeth not in Christ, is Condemned already.* You must get the Son. *He that hath the Son, hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life.*

John 3. 18.

John 5. 12.

3ly. This Wisdom consisteth in a careful and due making use of the proper means that God affords, and hath ordained, in order to Faith, or a Sinners believing in Christ Jesus.

1. Prayer, O be much in that Duty, Cry to God for Faith and for a changed Heart, Cry for understanding to see and know Jesus Christ.

2. Hear the Word Preached, so then *Faith comes by Hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* That is by the Word of God preached. *Hear, and thy Soul shall live.*

Rom. 10. 17.

Isa. 55. 3.

1. But know it is not a bare hearing that is sufficient, no, you must hear it for the future Time. *Who among you will hear this, who will hearken for the Time to come.*

Isa. 42. 23

Quest. *What is it to hear for the time to come.*

Ans. 1. To Hear for the Time to come, is to lay up the Word in our Hearts. (2.) To Believe or receive Christ in the Promises. (3.) 'Tis to find the transforming Power of the Word. (4.) To obey the Word, or to be doers of it, and not hearers only.

4ly. This Wisdom in providing for hereafter, is therefore to close with Christ, to be United to Christ, and feel the Work of Regeneration wrought in

us, and to condemn this World, or to be Dead to it, and to be always ready and prepared to Die. And to live every Day as if it was our last, or as if we were this Night to be called to give an account of our Stewardship.

U S E.

1. This reproves such who pursue the World as if they came into it for no other end, but to Eat and Drink, and heap a little White and Yellow Earth, for what is Silver and Gold else; it is but to Load our selves with thick Clay.

2. It reproves such who prefer the World above the Word, and the Body above the Soul.

3. Such that put the evil Day afar off, as if we spoke of things that will be long before they come.

Exhort. O Improve your present Time, and have continual Thoughts of Death, Judgment and Eternity.

Lastly, It commends them who are Heavenly, it shews the Saints only are truly Wise, O let us try to equal, nay, to out do the Men of this World, *viz.* be more zealous for the Honour of God, and to promote his Interest, and the Interest of our Souls, or Wiser for another World, than they are to gain the things of this present evil World; why should they in their Generation be Wiser than the Children of Light? And thus I end with this Parable.

The

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus,

SERMON I.

LUKE XVI. 19.

There was a certain Rich Man, which was clothed with Purple and Fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every Day, &c.

OUR Annotations (and some other Writers) seem to *Question* whether this be a Parable, or a Narrative of Matter of Fact. Some lay down Arguments, to prove that it is not a Parable, but that there was such a *Rich Man* of the *Jewish Nation*, and a *Poor Man*, whose Name was *Lazarus*.

And since the *Learned* cannot agree in this Case, I shall leave it to every Man's own Conceptions; yet I am most inclined to believe it is a *Parable*, tho' my Reasons I shall not here give.

But let it be Matter of Fact or a Parable, before it is full of Instruction, or may be of manifold Use to the Godly and Ungodly, to the Rich and to the Poor.

The Scope and Design of this Parable opened.

First, I shall Observe the main Scope and Design of it.

1. Considering what goes before (where our Saviour exhorts his Hearers, *To make themselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*) we may gather that his Design in this Parable, is to shew the Danger that attends Rich Men, who have their Hearts set so upon their Riches, that they have no Pity on the Poor, tho' Holy Persons; or to convince all Men of the great Evil of *Covetousness*, or of an Inordinate Love of Earthly Vanities.

2. To shew that Men may be very Rich, Great and Honourable in the Eye of the World, and yet be in a miserable Condition; and that the Happiness of Man consisteth not in the abundance of those Worldly Things which they possess; they may live in great Prosperity, Plenty, and Splendor (a little while) *And in a Moment go down to Hell*; Moreover, there is no Judging of the Love, or Hatred of God, by any outward Occurrences, or what befalls one Man or another in this Life; a Man may be very Rich and Prosperous in the World, and yet be

hated of God, or in a wretched State; and on the other Hand, a Man may be very poor, and seemingly miserable here, and yet be beloved of God, or in a Blessed Condition as to his Soul.

3. To shew, that the Soul of Man is immortal, and that when a wicked Man dies his Soul goes to Hell, or into Torments; and that the Soul of a Godly Man at Death goes to Heaven, or into Joy: And that as the Pain and Anguish of the One will be easeless, intollerable and endless; and so the Joys and Comfort of the Other, will be sweet and inconceivable, as well as Eternal.

4. To shew, that God's Word or the Writings of the Sacred Scripture (in the Ministration thereof) are the more effectual Means to bring Men to believe, repent, or receive Jesus Christ, *than if One should rise from the dead*; and discover how it goes with Good and Bad Man in the other World.

II. As to the Parts hereof, it contains the Character of *Two Men*. *The Parts opened.*

1. A Rich Man, who is described Three Ways.

1. By his Cloathing, or what he wore.

2. By his Diet, or what he did eat; viz. (1.) *He was clothed in Purple and Fine Linnen.* (2.) *That he fared sumptuously every Day.*

3. By his Spirit, he regarded not a poor Man at his Gate, nor shewed him any Pity tho' a Godly Person. 'Tis provable, our Lord refers to an *Nobleman*, in saying, he was clothed in Purple, &c. not that Rich Cloathing, or Rich Array in Noble Persons is hereby condemned; but Mens living in Splendor, Outward Grandeur, in Pride and Haughtiness, forgetting God and their own Souls, and without Compassion and Bowels to the Poor. This he condemns, and herein lies their Sin and Danger: The simple Wearing of Gold and Silver, and rich Ornament, in People of high Rank and Quality, is not sinful in it self, provided it be not Immodest Array, exposing themselves to Shame, or others to Temptations, yet no People should exceed their State and Ability, in respect of their Garbes, Dresses, or Attires.

Rich Cloathing or Dresses, not evil in it self in Noble Persons.

Doct. *Pride and Luxury prevails upon Rich Men, by what they enjoy, and that they are in Danger thereby of Eternal Misery.*

Riches in themselves are Blessings, but being abused to gratifie Men's Lusts they become a Snare, and Curse to such; Men may be cloathed in Rich Robes, and eat the fat, and drink the sweet of the Creature; provided they do it with due Moderation, and not *To make provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof*; nor forget according to their abundance to do good, nor to be *Rich in Good Works*, and Charitable to the Poor.

Rom. 13.
14.
1 Tim. 6.
18.

1. I shall Shew you how it cometh to pass, that Rich Men are so subject to abuse what they enjoy.

2. Shew how it appears, that Pride and Luxury prevails upon them, and they are in Danger hereby.

From whence it is that Rich Men are apt to abuse the Earthly good things they enjoy.

1. It cometh to pass thro' the Corruption of a Man's own Heart; the Heart is Naturally, Earthly and Carnal, and minds only such things that suit or agree with it, and as the Heart exceeds all due Bounds naturally, in desiring Riches and outward Grandeur; so when those things are obtained, the same Evil Heart leads them forth, to abuse them to the gratifying their Inordinate Lusts, there are *Seven Abominations in his Heart*. Enough to make Men fully Miserable, *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*.

Prov. 26.
23.

Jer. 17. 1.

Deut. 8.
10, 11, 12.

2. It proceeded from the Deceitfulness of Riches, by Means or Reason of the Corruption of Men's Hearts, they being both present and pleasant things to the Flesh; the Deceitfulness of Riches do not only choak the Word (as I have elsewhere shewed) but they do also strangely ensnare, and bewitch all Unconverted Persons; Riches tend to Exciting to Pride and Luxury; they put a Knife (as it were) into such a Man's Hand, to murder his own Soul, or cause him to forget God; and from hence God gave such a Charge to the People of *Israel*, when they came to abound in Riches, Peace, and Plenty in *Canaan*, that they did not forget him; and from hence 'tis also so hard for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. How are the Poor ready to bow before the Rich, and honour them that are High and Great in the World, and this feeds, and strangely takes with a Carnal Heart.

4. 'Tis no doubt also partly from

Satan, the God of this World; he that was so bold to attempt (this way) to ensnare the Son of God, besure will not fail after the same manner, to assault silly Mortals (who being not aware of his Bloody Design) are caught presently with his Golden Bait, *All these things will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*: Satan knows there is nothing like the Glory and Grandeur of this World, to catch and overcome Mankind.

Mat. 4. 9

5. Moreover, Men are naturally so blind, that they see not, know not, that there is any higher Good, than what is in Riches, Honours and Pleasures of this World; besides they have no Power (until they obtain the Spirit and Grace of God) to put Bounds to Unruly Lusts and Carnal Appetites.

2. How it appears, that Pride and Luxury prevails upon them that rich.

How it appears Pride and Luxury prevails against wicked that are rich. Jer. 5. 8.

1. In that they Eat and Drink to a base, evil and shameful End, even to gratifie the Flesh, and make themselves like *Pamper'd Horses, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife*.

2. In that they care not what they spend or consume on their Lusts, whilst their Bowels are so shut up to the Poor, that they will hardly give them the Crumbs that fall from their Table, this shews how they give way to a Luxurious Life.

3. In that they vaunt and boast of their High Station, and in their Obtaining the Desires of their Hearts, they admire their Happiness, *The Wicked boasteth of his Hearts Desire, &c.* They glory in their Greatness like *Nebuchadnezzar*: *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the House of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power and the Honour of my Majesty.*

Psal. 10. 3.

Dan. 4. 30.

4. It appears in that they forget God, *God is not in all his Thoughts*; or in none of his Thoughts: There is in these Men's Hearts no room for one serious Thought of God, nor of Jesus Christ; they being overcharged with Gluttony and Drunkenness, and Love to their Vile Abominations. *The Heart of the Fool is in the House of Mirth*; tho' God calls to Mourning, they are for Feasting.

Psal. 10. 4.

Eccles. 7. 6.

5. In that by this means they say to God, *Depart from us*; Nay, They contemn God, as if he could do them no good at all. *They take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoyce at the Sound of the Organ, they spend their Days in Wealth, and in a Moment go down to the Grave; therefore they say to God, Depart from us for we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.*

Job 21. 12, 13, 14.

Ways. May be some are so Bold and Impudent to say thus with their Mouths, but all prophane Worldlings say it in their Hearts, they that love not God would be rid of God; Riches and Worldly Pleasures and Prosperity are an Occasion to wicked Men to cast off God, and to have slight and contemptuous Thoughts of him; thro' their Pride they cannot endure the Presence of God, when he draws near to them by the Lashes and Accusations of their own Consciences, and this shews the Danger of Riches to an Unsanctified Heart, *What can the Almighty do for us, yet he fills their Houses with good Things.* Some read it, *What can the Almighty do against us?* They neither value the good God can do for them, neither fear what hurt he can do to them, and this is the Effect of their Riches, and Earthly Delights, and Pleasures.

Job 22.17

6. It appears also in that they neglect, nay oppress the Poor, yea, persecute the Saints, and are without any Compassion or Sympathy, they being so glutted with their Earthly Fulness; Revenge is sweet to them, and they vent it on those who fear God, and reprove their leud and luxurious Lives.

7. It appears, in that thro' this means they also forget their Souls, Death and Judgment, they live as if they were meer Bruits, and had no Immortal Souls, nor should ever be called to God's Bar; they do not believe God sees them, and observes all their Doings, and Thoughts of their Hearts, or will ever bring them to an Account for them.

Mat. 14.
3, 4, 5.

8. In that they thrust out the Word and cast it behind them, which pronounceth Curses, Wrath, and Hell against them. Nay, their Pleasure and outward Grandeur makes them to condemn the Word, and cast Reproach upon Christ's Faithful Ministers, and to seek their Ruine, if they come once to touch their *Herodians*, as *Herod* served *John the Baptist*.

Isa. 5. 12.

Lastly, In that it causes them not to regard the Works of God, nor to tremble at the near Approaches of dismal Calamities; *The Harp, the Viol, and Flute, and Wine are in their Feasts, but they regard not the Works of the Lord, nor consider the Operations of his Hands.*

APPLICATION.

Luke 6.

1. We may from hence infer, that the Wicked have but little Cause to Glory in their Portion, *They have their Consolation*, their Heaven here, and must have Hell hereafter.

2. And we may also infer, that Riches to a Carnal Man are very pernicious and hurtful to his Soul, and makes his Salvation hard and difficult, he is in more Danger than the Poor of perishing Eternally.

Exhort. 1. And therefore, let such that are Rich carefully watch their own Hearts, and see that they are neither carried away by Covetousness on the one Hand, nor by Pride on the other hand.

2. You that delight to go in Brave and Rich Array, see that you exceed not, nor waste that on your Lusts, that you should allow to Christ and his poor Saints; be moderate in your Cloathing, in your Eating and Drinking, and in your Lawful Pleasures; Remember *Lazarus*, who lies at your Gate, rather take Care to feed your Souls than your Bodies, that must in a short time be Feasts for Worms.

3. You that are poor, be content with your present State and desire not Riches, since they expose Men to such great Temptations.

And there was a certain Beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his Gate, full of Sores. Ver. 20.

And desiring to be fed with the Crumbs, which fell from the Rich Man's Table: Moreover, the Dogs came and licked his Sores. Ver. 21.

We have an Account here of another Man, who seem'd as miserable, as the former appear'd happy.

2. His *Impotency* he was laid, he was not able to come of himself thither, being either sick and lame.

3. We have an Account of the Place, where he was laid, *i. e. At the Rich Man's Gate*; perhaps he had some Friends that brought him thither, tho' they could not relieve him, yet they brought him to an House where one dwelt that could do it.

4. His *Condition*: He was a *Beggar*, one very poor, also *Full of Sores*, may be such that were not only painful, but incurable.

5. His *Desire*: Which shewn wherefore he was brought thither, he wanted Food, and desired not the best the Rich Man had, *But only the Crumbs that fell from his Table*, he would put him to no Charge. Yet we find not, that he had so small a Favour shewed him; wicked Rich Men will sooner feed their Dogs, than the Poor Saints, some Men are without any Bowels of Pity.

6. 'Tis said. *The Dogs came and licked his Sores*: These Churlish Animals shewed more Kindness to poor *Lazarus*.

rus, than the Rich Man; Men without Compassion are worse than Dogs, and a poor Child of God meets with more Favour from one of the worst of Brutes than from a Graceless Rich Man; Moreover let us Note, that God can cause these Creatures, that are fierce and cruel in their Nature, to shew Kindness to such that he loves, as a Raven fed the Prophet

A Child of God may be very poor, and in a distressed Condition.

Doct. A Man may be very poor, and in a distressed Condition as to the Outward Man, and yet be in the Love, and Favour of God.

But pray Note, it doth not follow that every one that is poor, and outwardly distressed is by the Lord beloved; no, no, there are very few Beggars that are Believers, most of this sort are, 'tis thought, the worst of Men and Women; for were they truly Godly, in such a Land and City as this; Certainly God's People would relieve them, before they should beg from Door to Door. I have often thought, that these Beggars are more earnest with People, for the Relief of their Bodies, than many good People are with God, for Succour and Comfort for their Precious Souls. (2.) Moreover, 'tis rare that any true Believer is exposed to such Want and Necessity, as poor Lazarus was (or such, who are signified by him) but such an Hour possibly hath been, and may be of Common Calamity, that a Child of God may be in such a State and Needy Condition.

Obj. David saith, He never saw the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.

Answ. 1. It might be so under that Dispensation, for the Promises of the Old Covenant were earthly, but those of the New are better Promises, besides there was not to be a Beggar in Israel. However this Parable shews, that a Believer may be poor, and in great Necessity as to beg. And now to proceed,

1. I shall shew How, or by what Means, a Child of God may be in such a low and poor Condition.

2. Shew why God doth suffer some of his Children to be poor, and afflicted in this World.

3. Shew how the poor may be supported, under their Poverty and Distresses.

How some of God's Children come to be poor in this World.

1. In the Negative, 'Tis not thro' Idleness after a Man is converted, nor by Extravagant or Riotous Living;

for a Slothful, an Idle, or a Riotous Course of Life certainly is inconsistent with true Grace: The ungodly became poor, many times by Gluttony, Drunkenness, Uncleanliness, Wasting, what they have on Harlots, and in Wicked Company, Mispending their Time, and by Injustice, which provokes God to blast them in all they have or do.

As to the First, This must be granted, that Divine Providence disposeth of all Things, and Persons in this near World, 'tis God that maketh Rich, and that maketh Poor, all is done either by his Permission or Commission.

(1.) In the Affirmative, Perhaps some Believers had Parents who were very and not poor, being able to put them to Trades, nor give them Learning, and not be fit or capable for hard Labour, they might and so by this Providence be very poor. (2.) Moreover, some may become poor for want of Wordly Wisdom, or Skill to manage their Callings, For the Children of this World, in this respect, are oft times Wiser than the Children of Light. (3.) Some Godly Christians become poor by Losses and Badness of Trade or by Fire. (4.) By Thieves. (5.) Some by Wicked Men thro' Fraud and Injustice. God in his Wise Providence, permits such Things as these to befall his own Children, as well as the wicked, but always 'tis designed for their Good. We know not by what means, the Person here represented became so poor, as to beg. (6.) God's People are sometimes brought to Poverty by Persecution, all they have had being taken from them, as it fairs with many Protestants now in France, &c. and with many but a few Years ago among us in England.

Secondly, Why doth God suffer some of his Children to be poor, and distressed in this World?

Answ. 1. It may be the Lord sees that Riches would be hurtful to them, Riches might choak them, or carry away their Hearts from God, Agar desired not Riches from thence. *Why God suffers some of his Children to be poor in this Life.*

2. It may be to shew to all, that the Happiness consisteth not in the abundance of what he possesses of Earthly Things.

3. The Lord may suffer it to convince the Ungodly World, what little Good is in Earthly Riches, and how little the Value of Gold, Silver, or Worldly Grandeur; even no more than we do a Bone we cast to Dogs, he gives these things to his Enemies, the Great Turk has these things, Crowns and King-

Kingdoms may be given to the Vilest of Men.

4. God may do it to shew, that as he himself is the Portion of his own Children, and their Reward is above, so that his People can live upon him, and be content, tho' they are outwardly poor, and distressed whilest in this Life.

Job 1. 9.

5. Moreover it may be to discover the Sincerity of true Christians, and to convince the Devil and Wicked Men, they follow not Christ for Loaves, or Earthly Riches. *Doth Job fear God for nought, or Gratis?* No, as if Satan should say, 'tis because thou hast given to him much Substance, and made *A Hedge about him, and about all he hath; put forth thy Hand and take all away from him, and he will curse thee to thy Face.* God did thus, and Job became as poor and distressed as Lazarus, and yet he held fast his Integrity; he is the same Job, when poor and full of Sores, as when he was Rich and Honourable.

God brings Wants and Afflictions on his Saints to try their Graces.

Hab. 3. 17.

Ver. 18.

6. Likewise, it may be to discover to themselves and others, the Excellency of Grace; i. e. Faith, Love, Patience, &c. how do these Graces shine forth in a poor, distressed and afflicted Child of God; this was one Reason, why Job was brought to Poverty, and Misery in this World. How is Faith in these Believers magnified? They rest upon God, live upon Christ, and upon the Promises with greatest Satisfaction, being content with their Condition; *Tho' the Fig Tree shall not blossom, neither Fruit be in the Vine, &c. Yet they can joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of their Salvation.* Moreover, a poor Lazarus can love God as well as a Rich Abraham: Also how doth Patience shine forth hereby, when a Saint under the greatest Poverty, Pains and Afflictions; bear up with a composed and quiet Mind, rejoicing in and magnifying God in the Want of all Things, that is, of all Earthly Things and Comforts whatsoever.

Some Saints are poor to try the Charity of the Rich

7. It may be to Try the Rich, *The Poor you have always with you*; why because Christ will try and prove the Rich, and see whether they will supply the Wants of the Poor out of Love to him, and to their Brethren; Riches are not given to God's People only, for themselves and for the sake of their Children, but for the sake of God's poor, and to support his Interest in the World, they are but Christ's Stewards, and if they hand not out, as 'tis commanded, they will have a bad Reasoning to make up at the last Day.

Thirdly, *How may Christ's poor be supported under their Poverty and Distresses?*

Ans. 1. By considering, that they ^{How poor} are made poor by the Lord's Hand; ^{Saints may} it is their Father's good Pleasure it should ^{be supported} be thus with them, they may and ought to say with our Blessed Lord, *The Cup my Father gives me to drink, shall I not drink it?* I am not brought into Want and Poverty by Idleness, nor by extravagant Living, but by the Providence of God my Heavenly Father.

2. By considering, it hath been the Condition of many choice and dear Children of God, Job, Peter, John, and many others, tho' the first had been very Rich, yet how poor was he made; and the other said, *Silver and Gold have I none*; nay, Our Saviour himself, was very poor, he had nothing to eat, but what was given to him, hence the *Good Women ministred to him*; *The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests (saith he) but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay his Head.* Also when they sent to demand Tribute of him (it appears he had no Money) but sent *Pe-* ^{Mat. 17. 27.} *ter to take a piece of Money, out of the Mouth of a certain Fish to pay the Tribute, Tho' he was rich, yet for our sakes* ^{2 Cor. 8. 9.} *he became poor.* My Brethren, Is it not an Honour to be brought in this respect, into the like Condition with our Blessed Lord and Master? Therefore, let not Ministers that are poor be troubled, since the Lord Jesus himself was maintained by the People; and also seeing God hath chosen the poor of this World to be his Ambassadors, and *Hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel, shall live of the Gospel.* ^{1 Cor. 9. 14.}

3. Because hereby God delivers his poor Saints, from the Snares which attend them that are rich; tho' it can't be deny'd, but many Cares and Temptations attend Poverty; but doubtless not so many as attend Riches; for our Lord never said *Woe to you that are poor*, ^{Luke 6. 24.} but he hath pronounced a Woe to them that are rich: Neither hath he said, It is as hard for a poor Man, to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, as it is *For a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle*; as he hath said of one that hath great Riches, nor doth he say the Rich receive the Gospel, no, but they were the poor: Again 'tis said, *That they that will be rich, fall into Temptations, and a Snare, and into many foolish Lusts, which drown Men in Perdition and Destruction.* ^{1 Tim. 6. 7.}

4. By considering that the poor Saints, ^{2 Cor. 6. 10.} tho' they *Have nothing, yet possess all things.*

Quest. *How can they be said to possess all Things?*

Ans. 1. Because they have all things ^{How Be-} which God gives them without a Curse, ^{lievers pos-} *The Curse of God is in the House of the* ^{sess all} *rich, if they are ungodly, they pos-* ^{things.} *sess*

sefs a Curse with their Riches.

2. Because poor Believers have all Things they have sanctified to them, it is not only without a Curse, but it is with a Blessing, it is sanctified; *A little that a Righteous Man hath, is better than the Revenues of many Wicked.* And again (saith Solomon) *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great Treasure and Trouble with it. Better is a little with Righteousness, than great Revenues without Right.* Poor Saints have all in Quality, tho' not in Quantity.

3. They have all things in Promise, they possess all things by Faith, *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

4. They have all Things that have any Substance in it, all the vast Riches of this World are but a Shadow, and pray what hath he that hath a Shadow? See what Christ saith, *That I may cause those that love me to inherit Substance, and I will fill their Treasures.* They possess all things that are truly good, and hath Substance in them, and therefore possess all things.

5. Because they have Christ, and he that hath Christ hath all things, *All are yours, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* They have all things that are best, or what God esteems good things, Riches that God so calls, and Honours which are Honours in his Esteem; if a Man have much Gold, Silver, Pearls and Precious Stones; must he have also abundance of Dung, or else hath he not all Things; no, he values not that Worth any thing; so a Believer having Christ, and Gold tried in the Fire, precious Stones and Pearls; he values not those Cart-loads of Dirt, which wicked Men boast of.

6. Because they want no good thing, neither shall they, but they must leave God to judge in the Case, for they may want many good things in their own Judgment; which God sees would be hurtful to them. *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

7. They are Heirs of all things, *Heirs of God and Joint-Heirs with Christ. He that overcometh shall inherit all things.*

8. Nay, and he now possesseth all things in his Head: We possess all things, even the Glory of Heaven in Jesus Christ, he hath Possession of all things for us, and we possess them in him; and at Death we shall actually be possessed of all things our selves: Moreover, poor Believers shall be rich, when the Wicked shall be poor, we shall have all things at Death if we dye in Christ. When the Wicked

will not have one Penny, for they all dye Beggars, they carry nothing out of the World with them, but Wrath and a Guilty Conscience.

SERMON II.

LUKE XVI. 22.

And it came to pass that the Beggar dyed, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom; and the rich Man also dyed, &c.

1. **N**ote, Lazarus dyed. And,
2. He was carried into Abraham's Bosom, i. e. into Heaven; even into the Bosom of Jesus Christ; *He was, &c.* that is, his Soul.

3. We have an Account of them who carried him, and they were the Angels; not one Angel, but Angels; as multitude of Angels encamp about the Saints, and minister to them while they live, so an Host of Angels carry the Soul of a Believer when he dyes, in Triumph thro' the Air (the Region of Devils) into Heaven, which no doubt is no small cause of Rage in those Evil Spirits, but they cannot prevent it. *Into Abraham's Bosom, Abraham was a Type of Christ,* but it may be not only called Abraham's Bosom simply from thence, but because the Covenant of Grace was renewed with him, and he believed in God; and therefore Christ would have all know, that his Soul was in Heaven, whither likewise all the Souls of his true Spiritual Seed (who depart this Life) go at Death, and perhaps to shew also that there was another Covenant made with Abraham's Natural Seed as such; and that some of that sort, (or who were in that Covenant) may go to Hell. For this Rich Man represents one of Abraham's Seed according to the Flesh (or one of the Jewish Church and Nation)

The Beggar dyed and was carried, &c.

Note, The Soul here bears the Name of the Man, so Paul saith, *I desire to depart, and be with Christ;* and again (saith he) *While we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord:* That is, while our Souls are in our Bodies, and when we dye [We] viz. Our Souls, *Are present with the Lord:* So our Saviour said to the Penitent Thief, *This Day thou (that is, thy Soul) shall be with me, (that is, with my Humane Soul) in Paradise.* The Soul is the Inhabitant, the Body the House in which it dwells.

For

Prov. 15.
16.

Prov. 16.
8.

1 Tim. 4.
8.

Prov. 8.
21.

1 Cor. 3.
22, 23.

He that possesseth Christ possesseth all things.

Psal. 84.
12.

Rom. 8.
17.

Rev. 21.7.

The Soul sometimes bears the Name of the Man or represents the whole Person.

Phil. 1.

2 Cor. 5.

2 Cor. 5. 1 For we know, if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we (that is, our Souls) have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. The Body is the Cabinet, the Soul is the Jewel, and it being the Chiefest and most Noble Part of Man, it bears the Name of the whole Person, or of the Man.

There are Four Propositions, I purpose briefly to touch upon.

Doct. 1. That both Rich and Poor must dye.

Doct. 2. That Death is a great Blessing to every Godly Man, or that a Believer is happy at Death.

Doct. 3. That there is a vast Difference, between the State of the Godly and Ungodly at Death.

Doct. 4. That the Souls of all Men are immortal, and at Death go either to Heaven, or to Hell.

To the first,

1. All Men must dye: Death is a Debt all must pay, the Rich as well as the Poor; tho' Men live long, yet they dye; the Noble as well as the Ignoble. *Gen. 5. 27. Methuselah lived nine Hundred, sixty and nine years and he dyed; the Oldest must dye, and the Strongest also; Sampson was a Mighty Man for Strength, but he dyed: The Wise also dye. Wisd. 1. 1. Wise Men dye, likewise the Fool. — What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death, can he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave. Kings dye as well as Peasants, Caesar rides in Triumph one Day, and the next Day stabbed to Death. Alexander that conquered the World, was conquered by Death. Nay, Grace it self exempts no Man from Death, the Righteous dye as well as the Wicked, The Righteous*

Isa. 57. 1. perish, and no Man layeth it to Heart.

Zech. 1. 5. The Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?

Quest. Why must all dye?

Ans. Because all have sinned, Death entered into the World by Sin, tho' it is no Curse to Believers, but by Sin all became subject to Death, that which is mortal must dye or be changed.

2. Because It is appointed for Men once to dye: The Decree is past upon all, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.*

3. A Godly Man dyes as a Demonstration of God's great Love to him, because this Life exposeth the Saints to many Sorrows. Poor Lazarus here had his Evil Things, and this way, i. e. by Death they are freed of all Misery; also a Godly Man dyes, that God may raise his Body to Glory; 'Tis sown in

Dishonour, but shall be raised to Glory, *Phil. 3. 21. and shall be made like to Christ's Glorious Body.* The Wicked likewise dye, but 'tis as an Act of God's Wrath, he cuts them off sometimes, that they may be no more a Plague to his Chosen, a Dishonour to his Majesty, nor a Curse to the Creation.

Doct. 2. Death is a Blessing to Believers, or a Godly Man is happy at Death.

This appears,

1. Because Death puts an End to all their Miseries, Sorrows, and Trouble; *Death is a Blessing to the Godly.* Lazarus was poor and distressed, but Death puts an End to all his Misery. All the Godly are afflicted many Ways.

(1.) The World afflicts them, they are reproached, hated, and persecuted in this World. (2.) Sinners grieve and vex their Souls, the Sins of the Wicked are the Sorrow of the Righteous, such that truly love God, cannot but be grieved to see how God is dishonoured. (3.) The Evil and Scandalous Lives of Professors, is no small Affliction to them. *Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ.* (4.) Their own Sins, and the Corruptions of their own Hearts, make them mourn, groan, and to cry out, *O Wretched Man that I am, &c.* (5.) Satan also greatly distresses them by his continual Temptations. (6.) Moreover their own Children (many times) add great Sorrow to them. (7.) Besides, Worldly Cares and Losses, and Bodily Distempers greatly afflict them. (8.) Likewise God oft-times hides his Face from them, but of all those Evils and Sorrows they are freed at Death.

2. They are not only happy at Death, in respect of Negative Good, or in respect of the Evils freed from, but they partake then of positive Good also; their Souls (as you heard) go to Christ. O what a Place is Paradise? and what Joys are at God's Right Hand? What is it to see and behold, and be with Christ?

Moreover, Their Bodies have sweet and quiet Rest, they fall asleep in Jesus, *Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labour.* *Rev. 14.*

The Rich Man also dyed and was buried.

We read not of Lazarus's Burial, he was buried too, but with no Pomp; he was thrown into some Hole or another. But observe, what is said in the next Place of the Rich Man.

And

And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment. And this brings me to the next Proposition.

Doct. 3. *There is a great Difference between the Death state of the Godly, and of the Wicked at Death.*

A little to open this,

1. Consider a Godly Man dyes in Christ, the ungodly in the Wicked One; the one dyes in a state of Grace, the other dyes in his Sins.

2. The Wicked are forced from hence, against their Will; *The wicked is driven away (saith Solomon) in his Wickedness;* but the Godly willingly yield themselves up to Death; *I would not live always, saith Holy Job.*

Prov. 14.
32.

3. The Wicked are driven away from their Friends, from their Houses, from their Riches, from their vain Comforts, and that Day they dye their Hope perishes. Their Souls are forced or torn out of their Bodies, and cast into Hell, but the Soul of a godly Man goes to Christ, *Having (saith Paul) a Desire to depart, and be with Christ;* the Soul of a Believer is not driven away, no, he desires to be gone.

3. My Brethren, As Death puts an End to all a Godly Mans Sorrows, (he being freed from all Evil) so Death puts an End to all a Wicked Man's seeming Joys and Delights, and then begins also his Sorrows; so that as the one possesseth nothing but good, so the other partakes of nothing but evil; and as the Happiness of the one is inexpressible, so the Misery of the other is inexpressible; and as the Joys of the one at Death shall never end, they being Eternal; so the Sorrows of the other at Death will never end, they being also Eternal.

5. The one is blessed in Death, and the other cursed; the one falls into a sweet and quiet Sleep, the other into a Troublesome one; for tho' his Spirit hath none, but is in Eternal Flames. This brings me to the last Proposition.

Doct. 4. *That the Soul of Man is immortal, and at Death goes either to Heaven or Hell.*

1. This I shall prove.

2. And then Apply.

1. I shall prove the Soul is immortal, *By Plain Texts of Scripture.*

2. *By Several Arguments.*

1. The first Proof is in my Text, *Lazarus's Soul went to Heaven when he dyed, and the Soul of the Rich Man went to Hell, therefore the Souls of all Men at Death, go either to Heaven or Hell.*

Object. *But this is a Parable, and what can you prove from hence?*

Answ. To deny that the Soul of Lazarus went to Heaven when he dyed, or that the Soul of the Rich Man went to Hell, is in effect to say, this Parable is a Fable, and so cast Contempt upon our Lord Jesus Christ. For tho' Parables are not so argumentative as other Scriptures, and Matters of Controversie can't so clearly be decided from them; yet may we not infer, from the Parable of the *Pearl of Great Price*, that Christ and the Grace of Christ is exceeding precious, or of great Worth: And from the *Grain of Mustard Seed*, that the Gospel-Church was small at first, &c.

Some
Parts of a
Parable
are Argu-
mentative.

My Brethren, That which is one main Design of our Saviour in speaking of a Parable, we may strongly argue from, and draw as concluding and as strong Inferences, or Arguments from, as from other Scripture. Now (as I have shewed) one main Design of our Lord in speaking this Parable was, to shew the Happy State of Believers (tho' poor and distressed in this World) at Death in regard their Souls go then immediately to Heaven; and also to discover the fearful State of all wicked rich Men at Death, because then their Souls go to Hell, or to a Place of Torment; and this being so, it proves this Truth as fully as if it had been a History, or Matter of Fact in respect of two particular Persons.

Object. *We will grant, it shews the State of Good and Bad Men at the Day of the Resurrection.*

Answ. Our Saviour speaks only of the State of both these Persons spoken of at Death, and not one Word of the Resurrection.

2. Besides, according to the Purpose and Design of our Lord herein, it evident that he shews, when the Rich Man's Soul was in Hell, he had *Five Brethren* living upon the Earth, who had also the Means of Grace afforded to them, *They have Moses and the Prophets let them hear them.* Certainly all believe, that after the General Resurrection, there will be no more any means of Grace afforded to any wicked Men, but that all will be swallowed up either in an Eternity of Joy, or of Sorrow.

A Citation
of several
Texts of
Scripture,
that prove
the Soul is
immortal.

Another Text which proves this great Truth is that of Solomon,

Then shall Dust return to Dust, and the Spirit unto God that gave it. Eccles. 12.
7.

It appears from hence, at Death the Soul is actually separated from the Body, and goes to God to be disposed of,

of, as he sees God, either to be sent to Joy or Sorrow. Again, he says, *The Spirit of a Beast goes downward to the Earth, but the Spirit of a Man goes upward.* Also, take that concerning the Soul of the Child. And he cried to the Lord, and said, O Lord God, I pray thee let this Child's Soul come into him again. And the Soul of the Child came into him again, and he revived. Another Text is that of our Saviour, Fear not them which kill the Body, but cannot kill the Soul. If the Soul was mortal, Man might kill it; but Man cannot kill the Soul, therefore it is not mortal, but immortal. Moreover, that which Paul saith in 2 Cor. 5. 1, 6, 8.

1 Kings 17. 21, 22. *thee let this Child's Soul come into him again.*

Mat. 10. 28. *not them which kill the Body, but cannot kill the Soul.*

2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have (that is, our Souls have) an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.*

Object. The Apostle here refers to the Resurrection of the Body at the Last Day.

Answer. He speaks here of the State of the Soul, when the Body is dissolved, and lies in its dusty Crumbs, not when it shall be raised again. And from hence in Ver. 6. he adds, Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we (that is, our Souls) are absent from the Lord. For further Proof read Phil.

1. 21, 23. *For me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain:* He doth not say to me to rise again is Gain, but to dye, or when I dye Death will be Gain to me: And from hence he adds, Having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ.

Compare this with that of the Promise of our Saviour to the Penitent Thief, I say unto thee, this Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. And to these Scriptures I might add, 2 Cor. 12. 1. 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. Heb. 12. 23.

Secondly, I shall proceed to lay down several Arguments, further to confirm this Comfortable Truth. But let this be considered before I proceed; viz. That by Immortal, I do not mean simply and absolutely the Soul in its own Nature is immortal; or had a Being from Everlasting: No, for in this Sense, God alone is immortal, or Hath Immortality. But, By being Immortal, I mean, it was created so; God hath bestowed Immortality upon the Souls of all Men, that they dye not, they cease not to live, nor shall be reduced to nothing (or be annihilated) the Soul being a pure, simple, immaterial thing, or an unmixed Being, Where there is no Composition or Mixture found (saith One) no

Death or Dissolution can follow. The very Being of the Soul is Life, and it is also the Vital Principle of the Body.

Argum. 1. If the Soul of Man be a simple, spiritual, immaterial and an un-mixed Being, not compounded of Matter, as all mortal Creatures are, the Soul is immortal; but such is the Being of the Soul. Ergo, All mixed Bodies, or Creatures that come under the Power of Dissolution are mortal; Matter and Mixtures (say Learned Men) are the Doors at which Death enters naturally upon all such Creatures, 'All

'Matter hath its Limits, Bounds, and just Measure, beyond which it cannot be extended (saith Reverend Flavel) but the Soul is boundless, and its Appetitions infinite, it rests not, but in the spiritual and infinite Being, God alone being its adequate Object, and able to satisfy its Desires, which plainly proves it to be spiritual, immaterial and a simple Being. (1.) It is void of any Principle of Corruption in it self. (2.) It is not liable to any Stroke of Death, by any adverse Power without it self. 1. It cannot be liable to Death from any Seeds or Principles of Corruption within it self. The Spirituality and Simplicity of the Soul admits of no Corruption. 2. Nor is it liable to Death by any adverse Power without it self; no Sword can touch it, no Instrument of Death can reach it, therefore it is immortal.

Argum. 2. If the Soul at Death be actually separated from the Body, and in that separated State goes upwards to God that gave it, it is immortal; (but this the Text before-cited plainly proves Eccles. 12. 7.) Therefore, the Soul is immortal; the Body goes one Way, the Soul another; the Body returns to the Dust, the Soul goes to God; the Body being made of the Earth returns to Earth, but the Soul proceeding from God, (who is called The Father of Spirits) it being created of God, and infused into the Body, that goes to God that gave it, or upward; whereas the Spirits of Beasts go downward; and tho' the Souls of the Wicked go to God, or go upwards, yet not into the Third Heavens; (for no unclean Thing can enter into that Place) but they go into some inferiour part of Heaven, where God may pass Sentence against them, and send them to Prison. God (saith One) is not so in the Third Heavens, that he hath not a Glorious Presence in the lower Heavens; if this be not so, how could Sa-

How the Soul is immortal.

1 Tim. 6. 16.

Mr. Flavel.

Arguments proving the Soul of Man is immortal.

On the Soul p. 96.

The Soul at Death goes upward to God that gave it.

Wadsworth P. 59.

tan appear before God, as is mentioned when he accused Job : If therefore the Soul dyed or slept with the Body ; it could neither be said to be separated from the Body, nor to go another way, and not whether the Body returns.

Godly Men
commend
their Spi-
rits to God
at Death.

Argum. 3. If Godly Men at Death commended their Souls or Spirits unto God, praying the Lord to receive them, then they are immortal ; but Godly Men have done, and always do this. Ergo, The Soul or Spirit is immortal. And Stephen calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. Moreover, the very same thing our Lord Jesus Christ did himself, And when Jesus had cryed with a Loud Voice, he said, Father into thy Hands I commend my Spirit ; that was his Humane Soul. For he was made like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted.

Acts 7.59.

Luke 23.
46.

All Mens
Souls at
Death hap-
py or mis-
erable.

Argum. 4. If the Souls of Men in their separated State from their Bodies, are either in Joy or Misery they are immortal ; but the Souls of Men in their separated State from their Body are either in Joy or Misery. Ergo, The Souls of Men are immortal. That the Soul is separated from the Body at Death I have proved ; and that the Souls of the Just are in a State of Joy at Death is evident. I say to thee, this Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Our Lord in these Words answers this poor Sinners Desire, Lord, Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. Here he discovered his Faith, he believed Christ was the Son of God, and that he would in an Hour or two be in his Kingdom, i. e. in Heaven ; and also shewed, he believed he was the True Saviour, and one able to save him ; and now our Lord assured him, that, that very Day [He] (that is the Soul of this Believing Criminal) should be with him in Paradise ; a Place of Delight and Pleasure, viz. the Third Heaven ; not that only he should be with him in his Kingdom, when he comes again the Second Time ; but that very Day, his Soul should be with the Soul of our Lord in Heaven ; I know some (who abuse this Text) say, Christ said to him that Day, or made a Promise to him that Day, that he should some time or another be with him in Paradise : What will not Men do to prop up an Erroneous Opinion, Mind the Comma, I say to thee, — This Day thou shalt be with me, &c. And from hence I infer, if the Soul of one Believing and Godly Person, goes to Christ at Death ; then the Souls of all Godly Persons go to Christ at Death : For as the Soul of the Penitent Thief

Luke 23.
42, 43.

went to Heaven at Death, so also did the Soul of Lazarus, and so the Souls of all Believers : And as the Soul of the Wicked Rich Man at Death went to Hell, or to a Place of Torments ; so do the Souls of all Wicked Men at Death go to Hell also.

Argum. 5. If Men cannot kill the Soul of Man it is immortal ; but Men cannot kill the Soul : Ergo, The Soul of Man is immortal. See what our Lord saith, Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul : Were the Soul mortal, he that killeth the Body kills the Soul also, even the whole Man ; but Men are not able to kill the Soul : Besides this, our Lord spake to encourage us not to fear Bloody Persecutors ; because tho' they may put an End to our Natural Lives, yet our Souls being immortal (they being not able to kill them) they live ; and the very Moment we loose our Lives, our Souls are with Christ in Heaven.

Obj. If any should say our Lord means, that Men cannot kill the Soul for ever.

Ans. I Answer, in that Sense they cannot kill the Body, for the Body shall live again ; our Lord speaks not of the future, but of the present State of the Body and Soul, or what the State of the one, and the other is at Death.

Argum. 6. If every one that believes in Jesus Christ hath Everlasting Life in him, and shall not see Death (I mean Eternal Life in the Seed and Principle of it) then the Soul is immortal ; but every one that truly believes in Jesus Christ, hath Everlasting Life in him, the Seed or Principle of it, and shall not see Death : Ergo, The Soul is immortal. He that believeth on the Son, hath Everlasting Life. — And this is the Record that God hath given us, even Eternal Life, &c. — That ye may know ye have Eternal Life. No Murderer hath Eternal Life abiding in him. A True Believer hath Eternal Life abiding in him, because he hath the Eternal Spirit in his Soul, and it abides in his Soul for ever. Now if this Vital Principle abides in the Soul for ever, the Soul lives, and abides for ever in Life, only not as being immortal ; (for so it was before) but in a State of Eternal Life also, which proves the Souls Immortality, and Final Perseverance. This is the Bread that came down from Heaven, that a Man may eat thereof and not dye. — He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever. Our Lord must speak either of the Soul, or of the Body ; of the

All true
Believers
have the
Seed of
Eternal
Life in
their Souls
now.

Joh. 3.36.
1 Joh. 5.
11.
Ver. 12.
1 Joh. 3.
15.

Joh. 6.50.

Ver. 58.

the Body he speaks not, *The Body dyes because of Sin, but the Spirit is alive because of Righteousness.* As the Soul lives a Life of Grace here, and hath a Title to Eternal Life by Christ's Righteousness; so the Spirit being in the Soul of a Believer, his Soul lives for ever in a State of Eternal Life, or Life of Joy: The Spirit being that *Living Water in the Soul, springing up unto Everlasting Life.* The Spirit of God abiding in the Soul of a Believer, as a Principle of Eternal Life, proves the Soul is immortal: For if there is no Separation of the Spirit from the Soul, but that he makes his Cohabitation there for ever, then the Soul lives for ever; or it hath a Being for ever, and a Blessed Being also; therefore it is immortal.

SERMON III.

LUKE XVI. 23.

And in Hell he lifted up his Eyes, being in Torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom.

I Am upon Arguments to prove the Soul is immortal, and have passed thro' six.

Argum. 7. *If the Soul of Man in its separated State from the Body, be capable of the highest Joy, or Spiritual Ravishments it is immortal; but the Soul of Man in its separated State from the Body is capable of the highest Joy or Spiritual Ravishments: Therefore, It is immortal.* I knew a Man in Christ fourteen Years ago, whether in the Body I cannot tell; or out of the Body I cannot tell; God knows, such an One caught up to the third Heaven. — He was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable Words, &c. If Paul knew the Soul was not capable to be separated from the Body (or if it was) yet if not capable in that separated State, of such sensible, and Soul-ravishing Joys and Visions; then he would have said, I know he was taken up in the Body; but since he says he knew not whether without the Body or in the Body; it proves, that Paul knew the Soul was capable of such a Separation, and in that separated state, capable also of the Highest Enjoyments of God.

Argum. 8. *If while we are at home The Souls in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; of Believers absent and when absent from the Body present with the Lord, then the Soul is immortal; but both these Paul positively asserts, Therefore we are always confident, that while we are at home in our Body, we are absent from the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 6. We are confident I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* 2 Cor. 5. 6, 8.

Object. *If any should object and say, Paul alludes to the Resurrection at the last Day.*

Ans. I Answer, at the Day of the Resurrection, we shall neither be absent from the Body nor from the Lord; therefore from hence it most evidently appears, that the Souls of all Believers at Death are absent from their Bodies, and present with Christ in Heaven.

Argum. 9. *If it be Gain to a Believer to dye, the Soul is immortal; but it is Gain to a Believer to dye: Ergo, The Soul is immortal.* See what Holy Paul affirms, *For me to live is Christ, and to dye is Gain.* Now if Paul's Soul was not in a far better Condition at Death, than when he lived in the Body; having more sweet Joy, Comfort and Consolation; Death instead of being Gain to him, would have been great Loss; for he might live many years, and have had sweet Communion with Christ; and yet it would not be any longer, before his Body would be raised at the last Day.

Besides, The Apostle speaks not of Gain, when his Body shall live again; but of that Gain he should have at Death, or when he dyed; not when he shall be raised at the last Day, tho' then he knew his Body and Soul both, shall be crown'd with Glory for Ever.

My Brethren, Is not the Presence of Christ, and Communion with him here, while we are in the Body a great Blessing; and if we may live Twenty or Thirty Years longer here to enjoy this, would it not be Gain to us? But if God should take us away presently, (and we lye in the Grave asleep both Body and Soul) without any sensible Joy or Comfort at all, certainly (were it thus) Death would be a great Loss, and no Gain at all; for we shall rise again from the Dead, as soon tho' we should live Forty Years longer in the Body.

Argum. 10. *If the Spirits of all just Men departed, are made perfect in Heaven,*

The Spirits of Just Men are in Heaven. *ven, then the Soul of Man is immortal; but the Spirits of all Just Men departed this Life are made perfect in Heaven:*

Heb. 12. 23. *Ergo, The Soul of Man is immortal. We are come to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect. That is, we are come to a Clear Revelation of this Comfortable Truth, as we are come to the Blood of Sprinkling, and to the General Assembly, &c. viz. To a clearer Knowledge and Discovery, of those Glorious Truths then the Saints had; who lived under the Law, or before the Gospel-Times.*

Argum. 11. *If the Soul of our Blessed Saviour went to Heaven at Death, the Soul is immortal; but the Soul of our Saviour went to Heaven at Death: Ergo, The Force of this Argument lies here, viz. Christ was made like to us in all things, Sin only excepted; If therefore his Human Soul was immortal, the Souls of all Men are immortal. And if his Soul was not immortal, how could it dye a Spiritual Death, My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death; and that his Soul went to Heaven at Death, I before shewed. This Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. — Father, Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.*

The Souls living upon Immortal Food proves it immortal Argum. 12. *If the Soul be fed with, and lives upon immortal or incorruptible Food, it is it self immortal; but the Soul is fed with, and lives upon immortal or incorruptible Food: Ergo, It is immortal.*

That which is Corporal or Mortal, may be fed with Corporal or Earthly Food; the Body being mortal, corporal Food feeds it; but no earthly or corruptible Food can feed the Soul: No, that lives upon incorruptible Food, spiritual Food, or on the Bread of Life; let such therefore that affirm the Soul is mortal, feed their Souls with the same Food they feed their Bodies; and if their Souls are wounded, let them apply the same Balm to heal them, which they apply to Bodily Wounds; and see whether such things can either feed or heal them; and try also whether some Rare Cordials Physicians can prepare, will revive their Souls when faint and drooping, since they affirm their Soul is mortal, and so corporal.

Argum. 13. *If the Souls of those wicked Men, who lived in the Old World in the Days of Noah, are now in Prison or in Hell, then the Soul of Man is immortal; but the former is true, Ergo, for the Proof of this Argument, see what the Apostle Peter saith, By which also*

he went and preached to the Spirits in Prison, — which sometimes were disobedient in the Days of Noah, &c. The Apostle shews, that Christ was put to Death in the Flesh, and quickned by the Spirit, or by Virtue of his Deity, even by the same Spirit or Godhead, he preached to those Spirits that are now in Prison, who once lived in the Days of Noah, wicked and ungodly Lives: This Text doth not only prove the Souls of Men are immortal, but also the Pre-existence of Christ, or his Glorious Godhead; inasmuch as by his Servant Noah, he preached to the Old World; to those whose Spirits are now in Prison, or in Chains of Darknes.

But to proceed, We read of Souls under the Altar in Heaven. And from thence, I argue,

Argum. 14. *If the Souls of those Blessed Saints (that were slain for Christs sake) are now in Heaven, and have White Robes given to them, then the Soul of Man is immortal; but the former is so: Ergo,*

I saw under the Altar, the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and they cryed with a loud Voice, saying, How long Holy and True, dost not thou avenge our Blood, &c. and White Robes was given unto every one of them. The Altar I conceive is Jesus Christ; they lye under the Wings of Christ, or are in Heaven by Vertue of the Blood of our Altar Jesus Christ. — And white Robes were given to every one of them. By white Robes, is meant not only the Righteousness of Christ (which brought them to Heaven) but the Purity of that State, and Happiness they are possessed with, triumphing in Glory. White Robes (saith One) is the Sign of their Honour and Triumph in Heaven.

Argum. 15. *If there are some now in Heaven, who were reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, then the Soul of Man is immortal; but there are some now in Heaven, who were reconciled to God by Jesus Christ: Ergo, See what the Apostle saith, By him to reconcile all things to himself, by him I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven.*

Object. *By things in Heaven, some say, the Apostle refers to the Holy Angels.*

Ans. I Answer that cannot be, because the Holy Angels need no Reconciler; Hath Christ reconciled them to God? Were they and the Holy God ever at Variance, or was there a Breach between God and them? Certainly, if there be any in Heaven that were reconciled

The Souls of the Saints in Heaven have white Robes given to them.

Rev. 6. 8, 10, 11.

Some now in Heaven whom Christ reconciled unto God.

Col. 1. 19, 20.

conciled unto God, they must be the Souls of Just Men made perfect, because no Creature but the Off-spring of Adam, or Mankind only, were reconciled to God by the Death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So much as to the Arguments, to prove the Souls of all Men to be immortal.

To proceed, let me add here some of those gross Absurdities, that attend the Opinion of such who affirm the Soul is mortal, and dyes or sleeps with the Body.

The Gross Absurdities that attend the Error of those that affirm the Soul immortal.

Absurdity 1. If the Soul of Man be mortal, then the Punishment which God threatened against, and also executed upon our *First Parents*, was only Temporal Punishment; as Sicknes, &c. and Death, or going to the Dust.

Absurdity 2. Then also the Demerit of Sin is not such, as the Word of God positively declares, nor is there such inconceivable Evil in Sin, if it be only Temporal Misery and Death the Justice of God requires, and inflicts upon the Sinner. Moreover then also it follows, that meer *Animal* Creatures suffer as much, or as great Punishment for Man's Sin; as Man himself would ever have suffered, had not God sent his Son to raise Mankind again from the dead; and how absurd that is, I will leave to all Mens Considerations.

Absurdity 3. Likewise then it will follow, that Jesus Christ is but a Temporal Redeemer (for tho' he may purchase other Blessings for us) yet he could redeem us from no other Death and Miseries, than those that Sin brought us under, or exposed us unto.

Absurdity 4. Then also the Curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God for the Breach of the first Covenant, is no great Matter, nor to be so much feared; nor is the Redeeming Love in God the Father, and in God the Son so great, as his Holy Word every where expresth it to be; for it must be then only to restore, or redeem us from Temporal or External Wrath and Punishment, and not from Internal Wrath which came upon all, nor to prevent that Eternal Wrath, which certainly would have fell upon all, had not the Son of God came to redeem and save us.

Absurdity 5. Moreover, then our Blessed Lord was unjustly punished in his Soul, for why did he suffer such dismal Sorrow, and bear such Wrath in his Soul for us, as to *Sweat great Drops of Blood*; if meer Bodily Suffering could have satisfied the Justice of God, or have appeased Divine Anger? Besides, it would render our Blessed Saviour more afraid of Death, than

many thousands of his Saints have been, who rather rejoyced in Death, courted Death and desired it, rather than shewed any fear to dye the most cruel Deaths, that Bloody Tyrants could invent: And what Disparagement and Contempt would this cast upon the Son of God, who cryed out, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*; and also 'tis said, that *He began to be sorely amazed*, and said, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*: Certainly this was from the Weakness of his Flesh or Humane Nature, under the Sense he had of that dismal Wrath his Soul felt (when our Sins were laid upon him, and that Wrath due to us let out against him, he standing in our Law Place) that made him cry out in that Nature, even with bitter Cries and Tears. Ah! none know, nor can conceive, what he endured in his Humane Soul; that he might satisfy the Justice of God for us, *The Pangs of Hell* took hold on me.

Absurdity 6. Then 'tis Weakness in the *Heathen*, who never heard of Christ, and of the Resurrection, to fear any Punishment that is due to them for Sin, but only that which is external; and how comes it about (or from whence doth it arise) that they fear and dread Eternal Wrath; and many of them so positively have asserted the Immortality of their Souls: The People of all Nations, even *Heathens* as well as others, believe the Soul is immortal; and is it not absurd to think, that God would suffer the whole World to be deceived, and to fear and dread an idle Fiction.

Cicero saith, In every thing, the Consent of all Nations is to be accounted the Law of Nature. — And (*Seneca saith*) *We give much to the Presumption of all Men.* 17.

And as One notes, the Ancient *Chaldeans, Græcians, Pythagoreans, Stoicks, Platonists, &c.* asserted the Immortality of the Soul; and *Plato* hath wrote excellent Arguments to prove its Immortality, amongst which this is one, *viz. That if the Soul were not immortal, wicked Men would certainly have the Advantage of the righteous and good Men, who after they have committed all manner of Evils should suffer none*: Also, some of the *Heathen* argued for the Immortality of the Soul, from the Consideration that nothing in this World can satisfy it, or fill its Desires, and so make it happy: The *Turks* also in their *Alchoran*, assert a State of Joy, or Sorrow after Death, into which the Souls of all Men enter; tho' they fancy a Paradise of Sensual Pleasure; Nay, the very *Indians* believe it, and their Wives will cast them-

selves into Flames, to attend the Souls of their Husbands in another World.

Man had no Internal Spiritual Life in the first Adam, if the Soul be mortal, and so not the Image of God in his Soul.

Absurd. 7. If the Soul be not immortal, then Adam had not, and so by Sin lost not the Spiritual Life of his Soul; nor was the Soul a capable Subject, to have the Image of God stamp'd upon it; nor can our Souls be said to be quickned by Christ, and so that Life and Divine Image restored to us again. For how can an Internal Life, be said to be restored to Man by the *Second Adam*; if the *First* in Innocency never had any such Life.

Absurd. 8. Moreover, If this be not so, what Dignity had Mankind above meer Brutes, exempt his Dominion; for they have all one Breath, therefore to deny the Immortality of the Soul, is to debase Man; yea, rob him of his Chiefest Honour, *Who was made but a little lower than the Angels*. Were it not for the Excellent Quality of the Soul, how comes Man to be so Noble a Creature, more in Worth and far excelling all inferiour Creatures; for in *Strength, Perfections of Sense, Agility of Members* many Creatures excel Man. Moreover, were it not thus, from whence proceed these Excellent Faculties of Knowledge, Reason, Understanding, &c. in Man.

Absurd. 8. Then also it was not true, which our Lord told the *Penitent Thief*, viz. *That he should be with him that Day in Paradise*; and Paul also was very weak, in *Desiring to depart and be with Christ*; and was mistaken in saying, *Death would be gain to him*, and far better for him to be dissolved.

Mr. Wadsworth. *Absurd.* 9. Take what a Worthy Writer notes, 'If Man was only to be reduced (by the first Sin) to an Eternal State of Dust, then really and truly God intended not to punish him at all, except it were in previous dying Pains; for that was but to put him in the same Condition in which he was before he was made, and that was only Dust; which speaks him no more miserable, than if he had never been made; and surely, none would think it had been a Punishment to Adam not to be made at, &c. Besides the Beasts, &c. would have suffered as much Misery, as sinful Man.'

Again (saith he) then also it will follow, 'That, that Being in us, our Soul, which understands, or knows God, Christ, the Spirit, in the Unity, Independency, Immensity and Eternity of their Nature, and that Love, Joys and Delights therein, above all the Delicacies of Food,

'Melody of Musick, and all the Pompous Shews of this Visible World, and all the hidden Treasures of the Earth, should be nothing but a Congruity of the Elements of Air and Fire, &c. And also that in Man, which is the Principal Subject in Regeneration. — And is Partaker of the Divine Nature, and is inhabited by the Holy Ghost, is nought else but the finest part of the Decocted Blood of our Body, and this (according to these Men) is that which the Apostle says, *Is born again of the Immortal Seed, the Word of God*; and is regenerated by the Spirit, &c.

Absurd. 10. Then also it will follow, that the Death of Christ would be the greatest Curse and Plague to the Wicked that ever was, in that he by his Death and Resurrection, brings them into a Capacity to suffer Eternal Pains, who should after Death, otherwise have known no Sorrow nor Misery: But alas! had not Christ come, the Souls of all must have suffered Everlasting Wrath and Vengeance; tho' it is true, their Torments will be aggravated for their Contempt of such great and inconceivable Grace and Favour, offered them thro' Christ in the Gospel.

Absurd. 11. If the Soul be not immortal, then the Sains and People of God in every Age of the Word, have been deceived in one of the great Motives which encouraged them to suffer violent Deaths, and cruel Martyrdoms for Christ's sake; viz. The Hopes they had, of being that very moment they dyed with Jesus Christ, were they born up with Self-hope, and a vain and idle Dream: They said (one to another) *O Brother be of good Cheer, for tho' we have a bitter Dinner, yet we shall have a sweet Supper this Night with Jesus Christ.* (Or to that purpose)

Absurd. 12. And then also as Christ's Ministers have generally told the People a Company of Lies; and also one of the greatest Encouragements Believers have to be willing to dye is gone for ever; which is the Hopes of being that Moment with Christ in Heaven; for who would not rather desire, to live longer in the Possession of Joy, Comfort and Communion here with Christ, than to dye and lose it, and come to Heaven no sooner, than if they lived forty Years longer in this World.

Absurd. 13. Then also Man begets the Soul, and is the Father of the Spirit, and God robbed of that peculiar Prerogative and Honour, who is called *The Father of Spirits*; and Man

If the Soul is mortal, the Martyrs have been fed with Fancies, & an Idle Dreams, as to their going to Christ that Moment they dyed.

Men are not Fathers of Spirits, but of the Flesh only. Heb. 13.9.

Man only the Father of the Flesh.

Absurd. 14. If the Soul be mortal, and dyes with the Body, who can prove it shall rise again? Or where is there any Scripture, that asserts any such Resurrection? 'Tis only the Body which the Scripture says, shall rise again, and this is one Article of our Faith, *viz. The Resurrection of the Body*; but not that we believe the Resurrection of the Soul; now that which the Scripture affirms not, we ought not to believe. Some indeed, talk of the Soul's sleeping, but they say Man is wholly mortal both his Body and Soul, and so both dye: As to such that speak, as if the Soul slept, or doth not dye but sleep, is a Foolish Notion and needs no Answer to confute it; for sleeping in the Grave, and lying dead there is all one.

APPLICATION.

I. We infer from hence, that the Soul is very precious, it is capable of Divine Union with God, and of Divine Inspiration; *There is a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth him Understanding.* And of Divine Assimilation to God, and of Divine Contemplation of God, and of Divine Communion with God. 2. Because the Souls of the Saints are in Paradise with Christ at Death, and the Soul is worth more than Ten Thousand Worlds, being bought with a great Price, and feeds upon most precious and incorruptible Food.

II. We infer the Loss of the Soul is the greatest Loss, *For what shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul.*

III. That the ungodly are the greatest Fools in the World, who prefer their Bodies above their Souls, nay, mind every thing more than them; their Children, their Servants, nay, their Beasts shall be fed and provided for, but their Souls are neglected tho' immortal, and neither be fed nor clothed; and tho' sick and wounded, yet no seeking and looking out for a Physician, to heal their precious and immortal Souls. I have heard of a Woman, whose House being on Fire, got out all her chiefest Goods, and then rejoiced, saying, *She had saved her Goods*, but One replied to her, *Woman, where is your Child?* (She forgot that, which being in the Cradle, was burned to Death) *O then she cried out, my Child, my Child is burned.* Just thus most People mind their Goods, labour for the World but forget their Souls, until in

Hell and then cry out, *My Soul, my Soul is lost, and tormented in these Flames.*

IV. It may be for Reprehension,

(1.) Such who expose their Souls to Eternal Flames, for Love to their base Lusts, and the Vanities of this World, and may be for the Unjust Gain of one Penny.

(2.) It may reprehend all such, that draw others into Sin; who are not satisfied to destroy their own Souls, but seek Ways to destroy the Souls of others also: See to it, you that entice others to *Drunkenness*, to *Uncleaness*, &c, Is it not enough to have an Account to give, for the Loss of your own Souls, but for the Loss of many Souls of poor Creatures also, that you have inticed and drawn into abominable Wickedness; even to the damning of their precious Souls for ever.

(3.) Such also are to be reprov'd, who promote Damnable Errors and Heresies, to the Destruction of multitude of Souls and glory in it. To see how they have corrupted them, they being deceived themselves, and given up to believe Lies, deceive others also.

V. Exhortation.

(1.) O bless God Sinners, for sending his Son, his Gospel, his Word, and the Means of Grace, to save your precious and immortal Souls; and admire his infinite Grace and Pity, in extending such boundless Mercy unto us, to prevent the Eternal Ruine and Damnation of your Souls.

(2.) Strive to believe in Christ, to receive Christ and to be converted; *For if you believe not that I am he, you shall dye in your Sins.* Again our Lord says, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* — *Marvel not, I say unto you, Ye must be born again.* Before he spoke these Words he said, *Ver. 3. Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* What then can you expect that are Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, or Proud and Covetous Persons; but that you must perish and lose your Souls, if you dye before you are regenerated, or become New Creatures.

(3.) It speaks much Comfort to Believers: O how happy are you, that are true Christians! Your Souls are safe, and when the Wicked are miserable you will be happy, Death will open the Mouth of Hell to them, but it opens the Gates of Heaven to you; be content with your Portion tho' you are

Mat. 16.
26.

Wicked
Men who
neglect
their Souls
the greatest
Fools in
the World.

Joh. 8.24.

Luk. 13.5.

Joh. 3.7.

Ver. 3.

are like poor *Lazarus* here, yet your Condition is far better than the Rich (who are Ungodly) and this will be manifested at Death, labour to prepare for it, Life is uncertain, and Death makes a mighty Change, 'twill be a Happy Change to you, but a dismal Change to the Wicked.

SERMON IV.

LUKE XVI. 25.

And in Hell he lifted up his Eyes being in Torments.

THE Point of Doctrine I shall take Notice of from hence is this, *viz.*

Doct. That the Pangs of Hell are dreadful and tormenting.

In Opening of this Proposition,

I. I shall prove, that the Pangs of Hell are dreadful, &c.

II. Shew who they are, that when they dye go to Hell.

III. Apply it.

The Torments of the wicked, the same the Devils shall endure.

I. That Punishment, that Fire which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels, must needs be very dreadful and tormenting: What Pain and Misery shall Devils one Day feel and endure, who are such implacable Enemies to the Holy God, and have shewed such Hatred and Malice against him, his Son and his Interest, and precious Children; why the same all Hypocrites and Unbelievers must endure.

Mat. 25. Go ye cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

Hell Torments are inconceivable.

Psal. 90. 11

II. The Extremity of their Torments will further appear, if we consider that it is inconceivable, or beyond all Mens Understanding, *Who knows the Power of thy Anger*; who can comprehend it, or can be rightly and duly affected therewith, we can conceive of Bodily Pains or of External Torments, but we cannot comprehend, nor conceive the Nature of Infinite Wrath, no more than we can comprehend or conceive of Infinite Love, Grace, Divine Favour, and Goodness; there is an Height, Length, Depth and Breadth in it, it is amazing and unsearchable.

III. It is intollerable Wrath and Vengeance.

I. Because it is according to the Fear

of it, and *O my Brethren*, what Fear have some awakened Sinners under Dispair, had of the Wrath of an Offended God, and of the Torments of Hell. *According to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath.* The Fear of some Evils are worse than the Evils feared, and many have experienced it to be so; truly said they, I found it not as I feared, or according to that Apprehension I had of it before it came; but it is not so here: Hell and the Wrath of God, will be according to that Fear any can have of it.

2. The Torments of Hell are intollerable, because worse than any Plague, Anguish or Misery, undergone by any in this World; some feel the Anguish and Tormenting Pains of cruel Wounds, broken Bones, sawing off Leggs and Arms; and others the Pain of the Stone, Gout, Cholick, some burning in gentle Fires, being consumed by Degrees, and long before they could dye, and some have been impaled, &c.

Now consider these Torments, nay, the worst of these; many of God's dear Children have suffered in this World; and therefore were no more than God's Fatherly Chastisements, or from the Sin-correcting Hand of God. But the Torments and Pains of Hell, are from the Sin-revenging Hand of God, the one proceeds from God's Love, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*; the other proceeds from his incensed Wrath, but if God's correcting Hand (or Fatherly Chastisements) may be so sharp, and put his Children to such Pain and Misery, how intollerable is that Anguish, that Pain, which is the Effect of his Offended Justice.

3. Consider what Hell is compared to: *What Hell (1.) To a Furnace of Fire*, and to Streams of Brimstone and Fire; and also called *Fiery Indignation*. (2.) *To a Lake of Fire*, indeed a hot fiery Furnace is but a Shadow of this Lake of Fire; and so far as the Substance exceeds the Shadow; so far doth Hell exceed all Torments or Places of Torment in this World, therefore intollerable.

4. The Pains and Miseries inflicted on the Bodies of Men, here in this World may be abated, or mitigated with some mixture of Ease, if not in the Body yet in the Mind, or by the Pity or Sympathy of Friends that seem to give little Ease; but in Hell both Soul and Body after the Resurrection, shall be equally tormented; and without any mixture of Mercy or Mitigation of Pain; neither will the Damned have any to pity them. *The Worm dyes not, and the Fire is not quenched.* Not one Drop of Water hath any Soul in Hell,

No Ease or Mitigation of the Torments of the damned

Rev. 14. 10. Hell, to abate their Pain; therefore the Torments of Hell are, and will be intolerable: *They shall drink of the Wrath of God, that is poured out without Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation, and he shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb.* They shall have Judgment without Mercy, Sorrow without Joy, Pain without Ease, Darkness without Light, all Relief is totally withdrawn from them for ever.

IV. Because it is to satisfy Divine Justice, as it proceeds from Infinite Wrath; yet no Satisfaction can they by suffering make, for the Wrong done to the Holiness and Justice of God, &c. but Wrath feeds on them, like as a Hungry Man eats that which satisfieth him not.

The Sorrows our Saviour underwent sets forth the fearful Pangs of Hell.

V. We may gather what the Nature, Sore Pangs, and Torments of Hell are, by considering what Pains Sorrow and Anguish our Blessed Saviour endured for us; when our Hell-Pangs were upon him, how did *He cry out*, and what Drops of Blood did he sweat, and yet had the Power of the Godhead to support him; nor was he ever under the Apprehension of being for ever forsaken of his Father, tho' for a while he hid his Face from him, by reason our Sins were charged upon him, and he was to give Satisfaction to Divine Justice in our Behalf.

VI. To add to all I have said, the Eternity of these Torments, shew the fearful Nature of them; for as they are easeless, so they will also be endless; to be tormented one Hour is sad, but more to be in Pain and Torture twenty four Hours, but much more dreadful to be in unspeakable Anguish forty or fifty Years without Ease or Cessation of Pain; but what are Ten thousand Years to an Endless Eternity? Alas! when Million of Millions of Years (comparatively) are expired the damned in Hell, will be no nearer the End of their Torment, than they were the first Moment they were cast into Hell. And is not this an Amazing Thing to think upon.

VII. *All the Passions and Faculties of the Soul will be let out to torment the damned.*

Conscience will torment the damned.

1. Conscience terrifies them, which is *That Worm that dyes not.* O faith the Sinner, what a Wretch have I been, what a God have I lost, and what a Christ have I lost? Who often *knocked at my Door*, and O what a Heaven have I lost? and what a precious Soul have I for ever lost? I was told by Faith-

ful Ministers, that what is now come upon me would be my sad Portion, but I believed them not, but slighted all their Reproofs, and cast God's Word behind my Back. For the Love I had to the base Lusts of my Evil Heart, is all this come upon me; my Pride, my Uncleaness, my cursed Oaths, my Covetousness and Love to the World, my Malice, and my Vilifying and Reproaching the Godly, hath damned my precious and immortal Soul: Also I neglected Prayer, and hearing of God's Word, I regarded not the Mercies of God, nor the Judgments of God, I came into the World a dead and condemned Creature, and I refused Life. The Sense and Punishment of Loss will torment the damned, as well as their Penal Sorrows.

2. Shame will also greatly afflict and torment them, *The Wicked shall rise to Shame and Everlasting Contempt.* Should a King lose his Crown and Kingdom, for the sake of a few Cockle Shells? what Shame would cover his Face? The Drunkard will be ashamed, O faith he, for the sake of my cursed Cups, and Love to my wicked Companions, am I cast into these Flames. Also Shame will cover the proud, my Heart was lifted up, I thought none so wise as my self, I contemned others, and made a Derision of them that feared God; faith another, I would not leave off my idle and foolish Fashions, tho' I grieved my poor Parents, grieved good Men and Women, and grieved Godly Ministers, *I loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.* My Heart (faith another) was lifted up, because I was rich and had a good Estate, and I regarded not the poor. My Gifts and Parts (faith another) puffed me up, O wretched Creature as I am, I am undone and covered with Shame and Confusion of Face.

Shame will torment the damned. Dan. 12. 1.

3. Sorrow will likewise torment penetrate, and seize deep upon their Souls, *There shall be Weeping and Wailing, as well as Gnashing of Teeth.* But it will be fruitless Sorrow, no Tears, no Crying, will avail them any thing for ever.

4. Despair also seizeth upon their Souls, O faith the damned, what a great Gulph is there fixed, God's Eternal Decree is passed, there is no Mercy for ever now, no Hope, no Relief, no Remedy: *My Brethren*, Here in this World when a Man is in Misery, he hopes it may be better with him, and this abates his Sorrow, and gives a little Ease, but in Hell all Hope is perished and gone for ever.

Despair will torment the damned.

Fury will
torment
them.

5. Fury and fearful Rage afflicts, and torments the Damned in Hell: How will they tear (as it were) roar, and howl in an hideous manner, and hate themselves, hate God, and blaspheme his Holy Name, and all that dwell in Heaven

The Com-
pany the
damned
will have
in Hell,
will tor-
ment them.

6. The Company they shall have, will also greatly no doubt torment them; tho' they thought perhaps the multitudes they should suffer with, might be some Ease to them; but they will find the contrary: May be such that they drew them into Sin, will there curse them and torment them with Taunting Reflections, It was you, thou cursed Wretch, that brought me to this Place, you drew me to commit this and that Sin: Others may say, It was you that deceived me with your cursed Errors and Heresies, and caused me to deny the true Christ, or to cast Contempt upon his Holy Person, &c. Devils also must be their Companions for ever, who strove to bring them into that Place, the Sight of whom must needs be grievous, and hateful to them for ever.

Folio, p.
535.

The Sorrow and Rage of the Damned (saith Reverend Dr. Bates) will be encreased by Dispair, for when the wretched Sinner sees the Evil is peremptory and no Outlet of Hope, he abandons himself to the Violence of Sorrow, and by cruel Thoughts wounds the Heart more, than the fiercest Furies in Hell can, &c.

Body and
Soul both
tormented
in Hell.

6. Both Soul and Body too, shall be tormented for evermore, when the Bodies of Men have been tormented, their Souls have been at Ease, and sustained them under their outward Sorrows, but in Hell the Soul will be tormented as well as their Bodies; the Soul will be tormented in one Fire, while the Body is tormented in another.

II. I shall shew you, who they are that shall go to Hell, or are in Danger to be cast into those Dismal Torments at Death.

Who they
are that are
in danger
of being
cast into
Hell.
Dr. Bates.
Folio, p.
531.

1. The Devils: You heard that Hell is Prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

Indeed it is difficult (as One notes) to conceive how material Fire can act on a Spiritual Substance; but it is (saith he) unreasonable to determine that it is impossible; for if we consider what Pain is, it is as conceivable, how pure Spirits are capable of it, as Spirits in Conjunction with Bodies. The Humane Soul in its Nature is Spiritual, as an Angel; yet has a pain-

ful Sense of Fire, and other afflicting Evils incumbent on Sense. The Body meely feels not Pain, but it passes thro' the Body to the Soul, if the Soul by a strong Diversion of Thoughts apply it self to an Object, the Body is insensible of Pain, as is evident in some Diseases; and that in the heat of Battel deep wounds are not felt. And as God by a Natural Constitution has ordered, that the Body so touched and moved, excites a painful Sense in the Soul, he may have ordained that the Devils shall feel the Impression of material Fire in the Place, to which they shall be confin'd. Thus Dr. Bates.

But I rather adhere to what Reverend Dr. Tho. Goodwin saith, viz. 'That tho' the Body shall be tormented in Hell with material Fire (which he saith, he will not deny) yet the Soul of Man, and the Devils shall be tormented with Immaterial Fire. Tho' there may be something in what the other Reverend Dr. saith, yet My Brethren, what Fire can be more tormenting, than the internal Sense of God's incensed Wrath, let out upon the Spirit and Conscience of a Man (as it seemed to be in Spira and poor Mr. Child) Certainly the Anguish and Misery, which our Blessed Lord felt in his Soul (when he bore the Wrath of God due to us) was inconceivable. (as I hinted before.)

2. As the Devils shall be cast into Hell, so shall all prophane and ungodly Sinners, that live and dye in their Sins, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind. Ver. 9. Nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, &c. that is, Such who so live and dye. For in the next Verse he saith, And such were some of you, but you are washed, &c. Ver. 11. And as here the Apostle saith, They shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; so another Text saith, The wicked shall be turned into Hell. And again 'tis said, But the fearful, and unbelieving, and Murtherers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their Portion in the Lake, which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the Second Death.

All Pro-
phane Per-
sons living
and dying
in their sins
shall be cast
into Hell.

Pla. 9. 17

Rev. 21. 8.

3. All Atheists who deny the Being of God, none can be greater Sinners than these. Let their Lives be what they will, for if they that know not God (with a right Spiritual Knowledge) shall

All Atheists
shall be
damned.

2 Thes. 1. 8.

shall

shall be damned, much more all that deny the very Being of the True and only God.

All that believe not in Christ, shall be cast into Hell.

4. All Unbelievers, I mean, such that do not truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is not enough to believe there is a God, or to believe in God the Creator; but we must believe in Christ the Son of God, as our only Saviour and Redeemer: *Ye believe in God, believe also in me. — He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Again it is said, *He that believeth on the Son hath Everlasting Life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* As all Men abide under Wrath until they have the Son, or believe on the Son; so if they dye before they so believe, and have Union with the Son, they must perish in Hell for ever.

All Hypocrites shall perish in Hell.

5. All Hypocrites who dye in that state, *They shall be cast into a Furnace of Fire, and shall have their portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers;* and therefore it is said, *Fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrite, who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting Burning, so as to be tormented for ever and ever.*

Persecutors shall perish.

6. All Persecutors who hate, murder and vilifie the People of God, for who are worse Murderers than these.

All final Apostates shall go to Hell.

7. All Backsliders or Apostates, who draw back unto Perdition, or who revolt from God, from his Ways and People and never return, *It had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them.* Certainly such sin against Light and Knowledge, *They were once enlightened; and therefore to them Remains no more Sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and Fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.*

Heb. 10. 26, 27.

8. All Witches and Sorcerers, who give themselves up to the Devil, and are never helped to disclaim, and get out of that Hellish Contract; they expect no other thing, then being cast into Hell. In a Word, All whosoever they are that are not born again. *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* And if they cannot enter into Heaven, they must go to Hell; and indeed what would an unrenewed Man, an unholy Man do in Heaven; for as no unholy Person can enter therein, so Heaven would be no Heaven to him, that has not an Heavenly Nature, or is not able to taste of the Spiritual Joys of Heaven.

Quest. *When shall Sinners go to Hell?*

Ans. Their Souls go to Hell at *The Souls Death, even that very moment the Body dyes; The Rich Man dyed, and in Hell he lifted up his Eyes, being in Torments, &c.*

And at the Resurrection when the Judgment is ended, they shall both Body and Soul be cast into Hell; *And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the Lake of Fire.*

APPLICATION.

I Infer 1. That many Persons are very near being cast into Hell, even every ungodly and unbelieving Sinner: O how soon may some of you, if in your Sins, feel how intollerable the Torments of Hell are? 'Tis not afar off, no, there is only a small Thread of Life, between Sinners and Eternal Torments.

Infer. 2. What Horrid and Soul-undoing Evil is in Sin, how hateful must that be to God, that provoket him to throw such multitudes of his Creatures into Hell.

Quest. *But will the Torments of the damned never cease?*

Ans. No. They will never cease. *They shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

1. Because the Judgment of the great Day, is called, *The Eternal Judgment;* and also because the Rewards of Grace are Eternal, the Godly shall have Eternal Joys, therefore the Punishment of the Wicked Eternal Sorrow. The Sentence that will pass, will be an Eternal Sentence; *Mat. 25. 46. These shall go into Everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life Eternal;* not only Eternally to Excess (for the wicked shall Eternally exist) but into Eternal Blessedness.

2. Because God is infinite in Wrath and Justice, as well as in Love and Goodness: Moreover, our Lord shews they must lye there, *Until they have paid the utmost farthing;* and it can never be, because a Finite Being cannot satisfy infinite Justice.

3. Because the Soul is immortal, and the Bodies of the wicked shall when they are raised be made immortal also; that is not be subject unto Death any more, nor to be Annihilated, they cannot destroy their own miserable Beings, and God will not.

4. Because their sinful Natures and Evil Habits remain in them for ever; and were they capable Subjects to Sin (as when here on Earth) they would

eter-

eternally sin; nay, 'tis thought they will actually ever sin by blaspheming of God, &c. and therefore shall suffer those Torments eternally.

Obj. *But doth not the Text say, that the wicked shall be burned up, both Root and Branch, or be consumed, &c.* Neither of these Texts refer to the Torments of Hell, that in *Malachi* 4. 1. (as Mr. Cotton well observes) refers only to that internal and external Wrath of God against the Jews, and Church of *Israel*, which began to burn against them in the Ministry of *John the Baptist*; and God let it out at last to the utter burning up, and consuming their Church-state, and left them not the Root of *Abraham's* Covenant, nor Branches or the Fruit of their own Works and Righteousness.

Infer. 3. From hence we may see how blind and deceived Sinners are, what Ignorance, Folly, Madness, and Unbelief is in their Hearts, they put the Evil Day far off, and neither regard nor fear the Wrath of God, nor will they give Credit to what he positively affirms in his Holy Word.

Infer. 4. We infer also from hence, that Ministers ought to preach on the Torments of Hell, they must be giving Warning, *Knowing therefore, the Terrors of the Lord we persuade Men*; that is, we persuade them to believe in Jesus Christ, and to fly to him from the Wrath to come: Why did our Lord speak this Parable, and also end so many of his Parables after this manner, *viz.* And shall be *Cast into a Furnace of Fire! Where the Worm dyes not, and the Fire is not quenched.* Ought not we to learn of him, who was the Great Gospel Minister? Moreover, Let all take heed, how they reflect upon such Ministers, who do insist frequently upon such Subjects, by calling them Legal Preachers; lest thereby they cast Contempt upon our Lord himself.

Exhort. 5. Sinner, bless God you are yet out of Hell, what Improvement may we think the Damned would make of one Sermon (if it might be allowed them) in Order to their taking hold of Christ, and so come out of that Place; but alas! there is no Grace, no Mercy, nor Means of Grace allowed them for ever, there is no Redemption out of Hell.

Admirat. 6. O let us also admire the infinite Love and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was pleased to bear God's Severe and Dismal Wrath for us and in our stead, that we might never undergo it in our Souls nor Bodies.

Consol. 7. Moreover, what Comfort and Consolation may this administer to Believers; the Blessed Jesus hath suffered, not only to free us from the Torments of Hell, but also to purchase for us Eternal Joys in Heaven, he hath delivered us from Wrath to come.

Lastly, Poor Sinners will you be wise, and remember your latter End: Will you think of the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, and labour to believe the Truth of God's Blessed Word about the future state of all Men: You need not to have one to come from the dead, to tell you what the Joys of Heaven are, nor how dismal the Torments of Hell are; for you have one represented in this Parable, speaking in Hell, O Hear his Sighs and his Groans, but if you will not believe God's Word, if you will not believe *Moses*, nor the Prophets, Christ, nor his Apostles and Ministers; neither would you believe, tho' one should rise from the dead to preach unto you. Know assuredly, that nothing you can do can save you from Hell; No, it is Christ alone, by what he hath done; and you must believe in him or perish, and when you do believe truly, you will soon find what a mighty Change will be wrought in you. True Faith is not without its powerful Operations, there are Sin-aborring, Self-abasing, Heart-purifying, and God and Christ-exalting Operations, which always accompany the Faith of God's Elect. So much at this time.

SERMON IV.

LUKE XVI. 24.

And he cryed, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame.

These Words shew that this is a Parable, for there is no Converse between the Saints in Heaven, and the Damned in Hell.

One Design of our Saviour in these Words, as I conceive is,

1. To shew, that the Torments of Hell are very dismal and intolerable.

2. To

2. To shew, that the damned have not the least Ease, Mitigation, or Abatement of their Pain and Misery.

3. It may also shew, that as wicked Men were ignorant of the way of Salvation, whilst they lived on Earth; so that Ignorance remains with them in Hell: He cries to *Abraham* to have Mercy on him, not to God nor to Jesus Christ; Alas! the best of the Saints of God cannot help the distressed in this Life. Can they shew Mercy to relieve Sinners, they may pity them, instruct them, pray for them, but they cannot ease or relieve; none have Mercy to bestow, to help the miserable but God alone; indeed if the Saints could, yet they would not shew Mercy to such, they know God will shew none unto.

To cool my Tongue.

The Soul hath no proper Tongue, but as Eyes, Hands, a Face, Mouth, &c. are ascribed to God (who is an increated Spirit) for several Reasons I have formerly mentioned; so Members of the Body, and particularly a Tongue is ascribed here unto the Soul of this condemned Sinner: And it may be (as some think) because such a one as is here represented had blasphemed God, or grievously offended with his Tongue; may be by Lying as well as Swearing, or by Reproaching, Backbiting and Vilifying the Godly, and perhaps this poor Beggar: *The Tongue is a Fire, a World of Iniquity, and is set*

Jam. 3. 5. on Fire of Hell.

Doct. 1. *The Damned in Hell would gladly receive the very smallest Degree of Ease, but it is denyed them; not so much as one Drop of Water is allowed to allay that Flame.*

God will measure to them as they measured to others, *They shall have Judgment without Mercy, that shewed no Mercy.* As this Wretch would shew no Pity to poor *Lazarus* in his Sorrow, so he now has no Pity, no Mercy shewed to him; no, not any thing to mitigate, or abate his Pain and Anguish. All Cries and Tears in Hell, avail nothing, their Desires are all fruitless, as their Pains are easeless and endless. The Passions of the Soul will abide for ever, both Desire, Horror, Rage, Grief, Shame and Dispair.

But Abraham said Son, remember, that thou in thy Life time receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

1. Note the Person here represented (it appears) was one of the Seed of

Abraham according to the Flesh; and so in that External Covenant with him whilst he lived on Earth; *Abraham* calls him Son, therefore a Person being one of *Abraham's* Seed, and in that Covenant. *Sirs, Being the Child of Believing Parents will avail no Man; no, unless he be a Son of Abraham according to the Covenant of Grace made with him; which runs only to his True Spiritual Seed, If ye be Christ's, Gal. 3. 29. then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to Promise.* Therefore most evident it is, there was a twofold Covenant made with *Abraham*, viz. The Covenant of Circumcision, and the free Promise of God, *In thy Seed (that is, Christ) shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed.* *A Twofold Covenant made with Abraham. Gen. 12. 3.*

2. Note the good things which the Damned once had, will be brought to their Remembrance, they shall call to mind their Worldly Riches, Honours and Pleasures; and how their Hearts were inordinately set upon those things, and also they'll remember what Means of Grace was afforded them, which they slighted and utterly rejected. Moreover, how they slighted and neglected the poor.

Thou received thy Good Things, that is, thou hast thy Portion in the World. Many Men have *Their Portion in this Life.* Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your Consolation; not because they are rich doth our Lord denounce a Woe to them, but because they set their Hearts upon their Riches, trusting in them and despising the Riches of Grace and the Glory of Heaven; nor improving their Riches to the Honour of God, in supporting the Common Wealth, nor to the Profit of their Neighbours, the Interest of Christ, and his poor Saints. — Thou (as if *Abraham* should say) didst desire no better things, and God answered thee according to the Idols set up in thine own Evil Heart.

And from hence note,

Doct. 2. *That some Rich Men have all their good Things, or their Portion only in this World.*

From these Men *David* desired to be delivered, *From Men which are thy Sword, O Lord, from Men of the World, which have their Portion in this Life, and whose Belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, they are full of Children, and leave the rest of their Substance to their Babes. They leave none of it to Charitable Uses, or not to Christ Servants to promote the Gospel, nor to the poor Saints: This very thing is a Character*

of One that has his Portion here, they leave all to their Children or Relations, and little or nothing for the other great Purposes.

Doct. 3. *That according to their unsatisfied Desires, God answers some Mens carnal Hearts, in Judgment and Wrath, and not in Love nor Mercy to them.*

1. God may give some Men earthly Riches, to discover the abominable Evil that is in their Hearts; he this way tries them, and for the Neglect of due Improvement of what they possess, will be the Aggravation of their Sin and Misery.

God deals with some Rich Men as a Man with a rebellious Child.

2. Hereby God seems to deal with them (as some Men serve Rebellious Children) viz. Cut them off of the Inheritance, by leaving them a Shilling in their Last Will and Testament; wicked Men who have abundance of the World, may justly fear that God designs to cut them off the Inheritance above, they are stubborn and rebellious Persons, and as such God deals with them: Alas! All the Riches of this World comparatively is not one Shilling, to that Crown of Glory above, or an Inheritance in Heaven.

Again Observe,

Doct. 4. *The Remembrance of those good Things, the Damned had when on Earth, will greatly afflict them in Hell, and augment their Sorrow.*

I shall a little open, and enlarge upon this Truth, by giving a few Reasons why it will afflict them, &c.

1. Because they see what Fools they were, wicked Men think themselves to be wise above others whilst they live, and are never convinced of their Folly till they come to Hell; and may they not cry out against themselves, for placing their chiefest Happiness in such things, which could not answer the Wants of their Souls whilst they lived. What Folly is it, to esteem the Creature above the Creator.

2. They thought the People of God, who were exposed to Reproaches, Persecutions, and many Sorrows in the World to be the worst of Fools; but to see them afar off in Glory, will tend to convince them and discover their Folly, and cause the Remembrance of the Saints (whom they abused) to be very grievous to them.

3. The Remembrance of the Shortness of their outward Happiness will afflict

them; that they for one Day's Delight and Pleasure, should lose Eternal or Endless Glory, and incur Everlasting Misery.

4. They will remember their horrid Infidelity, and how the Devil deceived them; they believing the Father of Lies, and disbelieved all which the Holy God said and testified, and deriding his Ministers, then they will say, *How did we hate Instruction, and obeyed not the Voice of our Teachers, nor inclined our Ears to them that instructed us.* Prov. 5. 12, 13.

U S E.

1. Let none call the Rich happy, unless they are gracious, it may be feared, that but few Rich Men are good Men; and tho' they seem happy here, yet are like to be miserable hereafter; these Men bless themselves, and many foolish Creatures bless them: But alas! the Holy God blesteth them not, they are under his Curse, *The wicked boasteth of his Hearts Desire, and blesteth the Covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.* Psal. 10. 3.

2. Consider that the Remembrance of Sensual Delights will not allay, but augment the Misery of the damned; if Pain here extinguish all the Pleasures of the Senses, and if Actual Enjoyments cannot afford Delight to the Body afflicted with tormenting Diseases; what will the Reflections upon past Pleasures in the Fancy and Memory, terrifie the Damned in extream Torment. (saith One) *The Remembrance will infinitely increase their Anguish.* That for such seeming and short Pleasures, they brought upon themselves Misery intolerable.

Dr. Bates.

3. Let such who are Rich, if not gracious, always remember this Rich Man, and behold him first in his Purple Robes (and perhaps) with a Chain of Gold about his Neck, riding in his Chariot, with many Servants attending on him, also his Table spread with all delicious Food, whilst Consorts of Ravishing Musick and Sweet Melody Soundeth in his Ears, and multitudes bowing down before him; and then presently behold him as he is in another World, deprived of all his Honour, and none to attend him but Devils; and instead of Musick, nothing but the Horror of a guilty Conscience continually following him, while his Soul lyes burning and is tormented in dismal Flames: Also behold him in his first State (possessed with all that Grandeur) but for one Hour, and in his other

other (or last) State for Million of Years; nay, to all Eternity: And you will conclude, the Rich who are Ungodly are miserable Creatures, and such to be abominable Fools that desire their Portion here.

And Lazarus his Evil Things, but now he is comforted, &c.

A Godly Man hath all his Evil Things in this World, which Friendly and Kind Death delivers him for ever from; sweet Death puts an End to all his Sorrows and begins his Everlasting Joys, when the Sorrows of the Righteous end, then the Sorrows and Miseries of the Wicked begin; or as Death opens Heaven to a Believer, so it opens Hell to an Ungodly Sinner: When Death comes the Souls of the Righteous are comforted, and the Souls of the Wicked are tormented; when 'tis Spring-time with one, 'tis Winter with the other; whilst *One sings for Joy of Heart, the other shall cry for Sorrow of Heart, and howl for Vexation of Spirit*; whilst the one drinks, and is *Abundantly satisfied with the Rivers of God's Pleasure*, the other is *Thirsty*, and has not one Drop of Water, either to allay his Thirst, nor Ease his Pain; and as no Comforts are like Soul-Comforts, so no Torments are like to Hell Torments; and as there is no Place of Joy and Delight like the *Caelestial Paradise*, so there is no Place of Sorrow, like the *Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone*. Moreover, as the Pangs of Hell causes the Damned to forget all his former good Things, Joys and Delights, so as no Ways to please him; so the Joys of Heaven causes the saved to forget his former Sorrow and Miseries, so as no Ways to grieve him.

Doct. 5. *The Day of Death is the Day of a Believers Joy and Comfort, and of the Wicked's Sorrow.*

The Godly sowed in Tears, but then reap in Joy; *Light is sown for the righteous*, and Death is the Harvest of that Light, and Joy for all the upright in Heart; and Death is the Harvest of that Joy. Do the Wicked think they shall always rejoyce, and the Godly always mourn; no, no, as the Joy of the one are but for a Moment, so the Sorrows of the other are but for a Moment in this World; and as the Joys of the one in the other will be Eternal, so will the Sorrow and Miseries of the other in the other World never have an End; but be Eternal also. How

should he want Comfort, that enters into his Master's Joy; can God comfort his People, can Christ comfort them, can the Holy Ghost comfort them, can the Fruition of God comfort them, can all the Joys, the unmixt Joys, soul-ravishing, soul-satisfying Joys comfort them; can all the Joys of Heaven comfort them, even Joys that are *unspeakable and full of Glory*; then they shall be comforted, and that also when the Wicked shall be tormented.

1. God is their God, who is the God of all Comfort; and when Death comes, that is God's Time to let out the *Greatness* of his Comforts to his Saints.

2. Comfort is promised to them that mourn, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*; such that mourn under the Sense of the Evil of Sin, and the Evil of their own Hearts. Mat. 5. 4.

3. They must needs have Comfort in respect to their State, being deliver'd from all Discomforts and Sorrows whatsoever; and are in a sweet, comfortable Place, and with sweet and comfortable Company. Who can want Comfort that are with Christ in Paradise.

4. God hath ordained or appointed Everlasting Comfort for all true Mourners, and his Decree and Counsels shall be accomplished *As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will I comfort you and ye shall be comforted, &c.* It will be Soul-Comfort, and Comfort without Sorrow, yea, and Eternal Comfort. Isa. 66. 13

V S E.

1. I infer, That you that are Godly tho' poor in this World, may lift up your Heads and sing, for tho' you have Sorrow here, Sorrow now, yet you shall be comforted, being delivered from whatsoever is evil, and possess whatsoever is truly good, and when you dye you shall partake thereof.

2. Who would that is godly be afraid to dye, or fear Death: Who that is sorrowful, but would be comforted; and what you want of it now, you shall have hereafter: Tho' your Life be a Life of Sorrow, your Death will be comfortable: O what a vast Difference is there, between the State of Believers at Death, and the State of Sinners.

3. Bear up under your present Troubles, God gives you now and then, Comfort in the midst of your Sorrows here, and will pour Joy and Comfort into your Souls like a River hereafter; when

when Wrath will be poured into the Souls of the Wicked, how full of Earthly Comforts soever they seem to be now; when your Comforters remember, come they will, never abate nor end. You shall never see one Dark or Uncomfortable Day more, but ever be with the Lord, therefore when your Godly Friends dye, *Do not mourn as others,*

1 Thes. 4. 18. *who have no Hope, but comfort one another with these Words.*

4. Let the Wicked howl and mourn bitterly, for they shall at Death be tormented; their Comforts are short-liv'd, and the Days of their Sorrows will be many.

Besides all this, between us and you, there is a great Gulph fixed, &c. Ver. 26.

This Gulph that is fixed Some think, is God's Eternal Decree: My Brethren, This shews that the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven is unalterable, and the miserable State of the Damned in Hell is also unalterable; the Glorified in Heaven are fixed there for ever, the one cannot pass to the other, they can neither change their Place, nor their Company.

The Wicked can neither return again to live on Earth, nor can they go to Heaven; all their Hopes end with their Lives; their Hopes of being saved dye when they dye: *Their Expectation perishes,* and all Means of Grace ceases; the Door of Mercy is shut for ever: They are in a bottomless Pit, out of which they can never get; but are bound in Chains of Everlasting Darknes. The Power of God and his Wrath as it is fierce, so it is irresistible, and his Will is unalterable, the Decrees of God are compared

Prov. 11. 7 *to Mountains of Brass.*

Zech. 6. 1.

U S E.

Sinners tremble, O what a Dreadful God do you provoke, *It is a fearful Thing, to fall into the Hands of the Living God.* If you know not what it is to sin against God now, you shall hereafter; and when you come to Hell there you must abide, Justice will hold you fast; *Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the utmost Farthing.*

Heb. 12. ult.

Mat. 5. 16.

2. Will you remember, what Sin will bring you to; why do you put the Evil Day far from you, Death may be nearer than you are aware of, and that is the Evil Day to all Christless Sinners, then they go to Hell; dare you refer seeking Jesus Christ, *Boast not thy self of to Morrow, for thou knowest not what one Day may bring forth.*

Prov 27. 1.

3. O dread Death, How [can] you think of Death, and are in your Sins, and without God, without Christ and Eph. 2. 12. without Hope; that is, without any true and well-grounded Hope; be perswaded to lay these Things to Heart, and labour to improve the Means of Grace, and prepare for Death, and bless God you are yet out of Hell.

SERMON XVIII.

LUKE XVI. 27.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my Fathers House.

Ver. 27.

For I have five Brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this Place.

Ver. 28.

NO doubt, but our Saviour represents a Man in the Parable, whose Father's House and Brethren were like himself; viz. Wicked or Ungodly. Here are several Things to be considered,

1. The Rich Man's Request, which was, that *Abraham* would send *Lazarus* from Heaven to the Earth: He would employ him in a great Work, whom when on Earth he would not allow the Crumbs that fell from his Table.

2. To whom he would have him be sent, viz. To his Father's House, and to his five Brethren.

3. The Message it self, viz. To testify to them; that is, declare the great Danger they were in, of going to Hell when they dyed, and so feel that Torment which he himself actually felt: Let him declare what a Woeful Condition I am in, and what a Blessed State he himself is; Let him assure my Five Brethren, that there is a Dreadful God, and a Hot Hell prepared for all that provoke this God, and live Wicked Lives, and regard not their Precious Souls.

It cannot be thought, that there is Pity among the Damned, or Love to the Souls of Sinful Men; 'They care not (as One observes) how many are as miserable as themselves; having a Diabolical Nature.

Saith

Serm. XVIII. *The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.* 105

Mr. Cruso
on this Pa-
rable, P.
118.

Saith another, 'It is most undoubted, that there is no real Charity among the Damned to the Souls of their Survivors, nor any true Zeal for their Salvation, &c.

1. Therefore (as our *Annotators* observe) he prayeth not for them, but for himself; that his Torments might not be encreased, or aggravated by his Brethren continuing in their Sins, and so come to Hell also; whom perhaps he by his Wretched Life (or Atheistical Notions) had hardened in Ungodly Ways, whilst he lived among them. A Grave Author (as our *Annotators* note) saith, 'That he prayeth not for them but for himself, that he might not be more miserable by their Company, who upon Earth were his Relations, and dear unto him. But another I think, speaks more to the purpose, take his Words, *viz.* 'It is most probable, that the main Reason which swayed the Rich Man to the making this Request was, The fear of the Aggravation of his own Torment, by the continued Sin, and future Damnation of his Brethren then living on the Earth, so that whatsoever he pretendeth, or appeareth at first Sight, *Self* was at the bottom. But we must (as he saith) remember, that our Saviour here speaketh in a Figure, and that which he intendeth by these Expressions to instruct us in, is no more than this, *i. e.* that all *Atheistical*, Rich, Proud and Haughty Persons, who in this Life make a Mock at Hell and the Wrath of God, and despise the poor Servants of God, who by their Doctrine, Holy Life and good Example taught them better things; yet shall find the Fire of Hell so hot, and the Wrath of God so terrible and intollerable, that if it were possible, they would gladly receive any Relief from such Ministers or Persons, whom in their Lives time they hated and despised (and were it possible for them, to have Natural Affections or Bowels in them when in Hell) they would beg the Favour of them, to forewarn any whom they loved (who are out of Hell) to leave their Ways, and believe in Christ, and accept Salvation on any Terms, tho' themselves they see are past all Hope of Recovery.

But to proceed a little further on this, God no doubt will punish the Wicked, not only for their own Sins, in which others partook not, but also for drawing of others into Sin, either by Actual Inticements or by their Example strengthened, and encouraged them to pursue the like horrid Lusts

and Evil Courses; some *Walk in the Counself of the Ungodly*. We read of some that caused others to sin, how often is *Jeroboam* branded with this Brand, *i. e.* He who made Israel to sin. O then how dismal will the State of Impostors be! who by false Doctrine and Heresies have deceived, and eternally ruined Thousands of Souls; as well as such who entice Persons to Steal, or to Drunkenness, or to Uncleaness, &c. And O what Torments shall the Devils have, who have tempted so many Millions to sin against God, to the Eternal Destruction of their Souls: Also such Sinners, who have been Instruments to draw many Souls to commit cursed Acts of Sin; or that have been Ring-leaders to Wickedness be sure shall have a Hot Hell. Nay, my Brethren, if Just and Righteous Endeavours are not used, to dissuade others from their sinful Ways, it may provoke God; he hath punished some Men in this Life in indulging their Children in Sin, or not endeavouring to restrain them from Acts of great Wickedness, as in *Ely's* Case; and he may punish others in Hell for ever, for their great Wickedness in this respect; How do some by their own Evil Example, rather encourage their Children in abominable Acts of Sin, rather than forwarn them or strive to restrain them from it. — And by sending them to such Places, *Dancing* where they can learn nothing but evil *Schools, &c.* and cursed Practices.

U S E.

1. Learn from hence not to be Partakers of other Men's Sins, this may be done many ways; which here I shall not speak to. But,

2. Much more learn to avoid Drawing others into Sin: Look to it, you that entice others to Drunkenness, or to Uncleaness; or to hear false Teachers, such that deny the Christ of God, or that preach not Justification and Salvation by Christ alone. You may bring the Blood of such Persons upon your own Souls, and not perish yourselves only, but be Instruments of their Destruction, also tho' all ignorantly done *Take heed who you hear*. Our Days in this Case are very perilous.

Be sure take heed you be not Ring-leaders to Wickedness, nor into any false Way, Notions and Opinions.

The Person here represented, it is concluded, had been an Evil Instrument to blind, and harden his Brethren in some wicked Ways or another; and so feared his Torments might be augmented

D d

mented, if they thro' that Means came to the Place of Torment.

But to proceed,

Abraham said, they have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. Ver. 29.

And he said, Father Abraham, but if one went from the dead they will repent. Ver. 30.

And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Ver. 31.

Luke 16.
16.

1. Note, It is no small Blessing to have the Written Word, or Gods Sacred Oracles, *Moses and the Prophets were until John*, that is, they were the chief External Means God afforded his People, to direct them into the Way of Life until *John*; but we have not only the Old Testament, or *Moses and the Prophets*; but the Holy Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles; we have the New Testament also, and so much clearer Light than such had, who lived under the Ministration of the Law, or in the Times of the Old Prophets.

2. See the Blindness of Mens Hearts, and the Vainness of their Imaginations, Alas! Hell removes not that Infidelity, Folly, and Ignorance that is in them; they remain in the same Mind and fill'd with the same idle Fancies and

- Dreams, that possessed them when on Earth: Hell's no Place of Conversion. Sinners think that Way to be the most effectual to bring them to Repentance, which God hath not ordained; they stop their Ears, or are deaf to the Voice of God's Word, and think some sensible Evidence (either of future Joys in Heaven, or of the Wrath of God in Hell) will work more powerfully on the Hearts of Sinners, than the Revelation of the Word, or the Preaching thereof, they oppose their Fancies to the Divine Oracles, or God's Sacred Institutions; *They have*, saith

Isa. 66. 3.

the Lord, chosen their own Ways; they will give the Preference to what proceeds out of their Imaginations; like as the *Jews and Pharises, Who made void the Commandments of God thro' their Traditions*; or are like the People of

Mat. 15. 6

Isa. 8. 6.

Old, Who refused the Waters of Shiloh, that went softly and rejoiced in Rezen, and Remaliahs Son; or esteemed the Word of God as a small and contemptible Brook, and rather adhered to the lofty and proud Notions of silly Mor-

2 Kings 5.
12.

tals. Are not the Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Rivers of Israel; said *Naaman the Syrian*. The Cause of

Reverend
Cruso.

this (as *Onc* notes) is their Pride and Arrogancy, together with Self-love;

as likewise, that Rebellion and Perverseness there is in their Hearts against God, and no doubt Satan is not wanting in stirring them up thro' his Malice, to contradict the Wisdom, Appointment and Authority of God; he knowing hereby the Holy God will be provoked, and that he will pour forth his Wrath upon them, for opposing his Sovereign Will and Pleasure: For Sinners hereby seem to intimate, that their Wisdom exceeds the Wisdom of God, as if they knew what ways would sooner bring Men to Repentance, than God himself; which is to confront Divine Wisdom, and so inexcusable Presumption: Let this be a Caution and Warning to all such, who go about *To set up their Post by God's Post*, or bring in their Superstitious Worship and Vain Traditions, as if God was negligent, or had omitted such things that would tend much to his own Honour, and the Profit of Mens Souls. *Job 11. 12*
Vain Man would be wise, tho' Man is born like a Wild Ass's Colt; i. e. He would be wise beyond his Line (saith One) or in things above him, tho' he is but like a Brutish Creature, yet would magnifie his Wisdom above the Wisdom of God. O ye Children of Men when will you leave your Folly, and strive to Bring down High Thoughts that exalt themselves in you, against the Will, Pleasure and Authority of God, and submit to him before he draws forth his Sword, and cuts you off in his Anger.

They have Moses and the Prophets, &c.

That is, They have their Writings, or those Divine Oracles, that God appointed as the Chief Outward Means, to deter Men from Sin, and to direct them into the Way of Salvation: They *my Brethren*, that lived before *John the Baptist*, Christ and his Apostles (as I hinted before) had only the Old Testament; but it may be said, we who live in these Gospel-Times, have Christ the Son of God sent from Heaven, whom God hath spoken unto us in these *last Days*; whose Holy Doctrine is laid down in the Writings of the Evangelist, and the Holy Apostles. True the Old Testament testified of Christ, *Moses* pointed unto Christ, the Shadows of the Law and Sacrifices held forth Jesus Christ, and the Prophets prophesied of Christ, but yet that was but a dark Dispensation of the Gospel; and hence it is said, *Many Prophets and Kings desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which you bear, and have not heard them*: *Luke 10. 24.*

them: That is, To see Christ come in the Flesh, and to behold the Vail taken off, and so to see with open Face as in a Glass, the Glory of God shining forth in the Ministration of the Gospel. But let no Man mistake me, the Law is still of great Use, and the Old Testament is of the same Authority with the New, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable, &c.* The Law convinceth of Sin, and discovers the Woeful State and Condition all Sinners naturally are in, and God by Moses and the Prophets denounceth Wrath against all ungodly Sinners; but yet pray know, that we are only to receive the Law now from the Hands of Christ, or from the Mouth of Our High Priest. Moses as a Teacher was not to abide in the House for ever, his Ministration of the Law abides not, tho' the Law as it is in the Hand of Christ, abides as a Rule of Righteousness for ever. And from hence Note,

Doct. *That it is no small Blessing and Priviledge, for a People to have the Written Word of God, especially the Gospel or New Testament; i. e. The Writings of the Evangelists, and Holy Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Wherein
the Word
of God is of
useful. nay,
of absolute
Necessity.

This I shall endeavour to demonstrate, and shew wherein the Written Word of God is of such Great Use.

1. The Word of God is of such great Use, that without the Knowledge of it; what can Men know in any Nation of the World concerning God, &c. but only meer Natural Religion, or what is made known by the Light of Natural Conscience, thro' the Help of the Visible Things of the Creation: For the Heathen or Pagan World know no more, nor any People on Earth, who never had God's written Word, nor conversed with any Persons who had the Knowledge of them; they may know the Being of a God, together with his Glory, Wisdom and Mighty Power considered as a Creator,

Psa. 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shew his Handy Work.*

Rom. 1. 20 *For the invisible Things of him from the Beginning of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse. But they shew nothing of Christ, or report nothing of a Redeemer, nor can any know this, but by the Revelation of the Holy Scripture.*

2. Moreover, such is the Usefulness

of the written Word, that upon this Respect the Apostle shews, that the Jews had the Advantage of the Gentiles, viz. *Because unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* For God only gave his Laws and Statutes unto Israel, some of which God wrote with his own Finger, and he commanded Moses to write them all in a Book. — *He shewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel.* — *He hath not dealt so with any Nation, as for his Judgments they have not known them, praise ye the Lord.*

The Jews had the Advantage of the Gentiles, in having the written Word of God, or the Law.
Rom. 3. 1.
Exod. 71.
14.
Numb. 5.
23.
Deut. 31.
24.

3. Matter of Fact proves, that all Men remain ignorant of Christ and Salvation, who have not, nor ever heard of the Sacred Scriptures, by which Means it evidently appears, that this great and importunate Matter only depends upon Revelation; for such who have conversed with the Pagan or Heathen People, found them altogether ignorant of the very Name of Christ; they never heard of any such Person, much less of that blessed Sacrifice he offered up to God for Sin, and of Faith in him, *For how shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard.*

Psa. 147.
19, 20.
The Pagan World know nothing of Christ.
Rom. 10.
14.

4. This further appears, for tho' (as the Apostle shews) God at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, — *bath in these last Times spoken unto us by his Son, &c.* By the Lord Jesus Christ only, as the last great Prophet he promised to raise up, to reveal his Mind and Will unto the Sons of Men, whose Holy Doctrine together with what he hath done and suffered, he commanded to be written, and to this very End, that Men might know and believe in him; tho' all Things our Lord did are not written, yet so many things are left upon Sacred Record, that God saw was necessary for us to know, in order to Instruction, Reproof, Correction, Comfort and Eternal Salvation.

But these things are written that ye might know Jesus is the Christ, and that Believing ye might have Life thro' his Name.

Joh. 20. 31

This shews the absolute Necessity of the Writings of the New Testament; God being pleased this way only, to reveal or make known the Blessed Saviour; and to make his Word as it is wrote, and opened in the Ministration of the Gospel, his ordinary Way to work Faith thro' the Spirit in the Souls of Men: Saith Paul, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.* — Why so, or how comes this to pass? For therein is the Righteousness

Rom. 1.
16, 17.

ousness of God revealed, &c. 'Tis thereby revealed and no other way (except God doth it in some extraordinary or miraculous Manner) who being a free Agent may step out of his own ordinary and instituted Way if he please; but it is not revealed to any, by the Light that is within all Men, nor by the Visible Things that are made, &c.

5. The Holy Scripture is (as the Apostle shews) every way useful by God's Ordination, being given by Inspiration of God, or by Holy Men of God, who speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness, — that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* There is nothing needful for us to know or be instructed in, but is contained in the written Word of God, tho' they are not understood by any, without the Holy Spirit opens them to us, and works Faith in our Souls.

6. And Lastly, The written Word (it appears from hence) is the only Rule both of Faith and Practice; and indeed should this be denied, God hath left us no certain Rule at all, as hereafter I shall (God assisting) endeavour to prove, which cannot stand consistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of his Holy Majesty. Therefore, the Sacred Oracles should be held in highest Esteem, being beyond all pretended Visions, Dreams, or Apparitions whatsoever.

And from hence, we may see the great Blindness of this Wicked Creature in Hell, who conceived that if one rose from the dead to tell his *Five Brethren*, the State of the dead in the other World, they would believe or be persuaded; who would not be prevailed with so to do by the written Word of God; indeed he was for a Sign, like as the Jews were: *What sign shewest thou, that we may believe on thee?* As if those Miracles our Lord did, were not sufficient to confirm his Holy Doctrine. And thus it appears, that those who have not the written Word of God, have not the greatest Blessing under Heaven; they are with the Means God has appointed, to bring Men out of Darkness into Light, and have no Ways or Means afforded them, to reveal Christ to them; they are without that Stated and Established Rule and Way of Faith and Conversion, and so left in a dismal Condition.

U S E.

1. O Prize God's Holy Word, esteem the Law of his Mouth above thousands of Gold and Silver, as *David* did: Value it above your Lives, account it your greatest Riches, prefer it more than *Mines of Gold*.

2. Labour to believe the Truths contained therein, never doubt of the Verity of God's Word, conclude all such Thoughts, that may be darted into your Minds, to question the Veracity of the Sacred Bible are from the Devil.

3. Expect no new Revelation from God, for God hath established his Word for ever, he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his Mouth; Heaven and Earth shall pass away, before one Jot or Tittle of God's Word shall pass away. Expect no new Revelation, nor any other Prophet to be raised up, to discover the Mind of God to you, or to make void any thing that is not written, or to teach you otherwise to believe, act, or do, that you may be saved.

4. Entreat God to bless his own blessed means, or his avowed and established Institution, to your Conviction, and Conversion, and Eternal Salvation. *O Take up and Read*, search the Scripture, neglect not reading your Holy Bible, and pray that God would give you Wisdom to understand what you read, Pray over the Word which is the *Immortal Seed*, by which the *Babe of Grace* is begotten and nourished.

1 Pet. 1.
18.
Cap. 2.
1, 2.

5. Know that the Word of Christ remains just as you find it written, even every Precept, every Ordinance, every Promise, without any Alteration, Additions to it, or Diminutions from it: Therefore have no regard to any, who press things upon you as Truths of Christ that are not written; for the Precepts of Christ are laid down in the *New Testament* very plainly, the Faithfulness of the Son exceeding the Care and Faithfulness of *Moses*, who was but a Servant in God's House. The Jews had made void many of the Commandments of God thro' their Traditions, which from the Beginning were not so. No Church, no People or Person under Heaven have any Power to alter, any thing left in Christ's Last Will and Testament; and such that add thereto, or diminish therefrom are pronounced accursed.

Deut. 4.1.
Rev. 22.
18.
Prov. 30.
6.

7. Be aware of those Men, who condemn the Holy Scripture, and such who strive to render it to be contradictory to it self, and full of Falsities, and commend

mend Natural Light above it, or those who pretend to Inspiration and extraordinary Revelation, and cry up their Curfed Books to be of Equal Authority with the Holy Bible; nay, indeed magnifies there detestable *Non-sensical Scribling*, above those Sacred Oracles: The Holy Scripture, they call a dead Letter (as the *Papists* call it a Noise of Wax) but their own Books are called *Light and Life*, a Word from God is the Voice of God, &c.

Lastly, Take heed you do not receive the Word of God's Grace in vain, but strive to mix Faith with it, for otherwise it will not profit you any thing, or at least not be made an Instrument of God's Power to the Salvation of your Souls.

SERMON XIX.

LUKE XVI. 31.

And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the dead.

I Shall from hence Note,

Doct. That the Written Word of God is of Divine Authority, and therefore is above all pretended Inspirations or Apparitions of the Dead, &c. and so of greater Efficacy to bring Men to believe.

In speaking to this Proposition, I shall,

1. Lay down several Arguments, to confirm the Truth of this Doctrine.
2. Prove that the Sacred Scriptures as read (especially as preached and opened in the Ministry of such Men Christ hath sent, or authorized to preach) hath far more Efficacy to bring Men to believe, than any pretended immediate Revelation, or than if one should rise from the dead.
3. Shew you how the Sacred Scriptures should be heard, when faithfully preached.

Note this by the way, that it is no Wonder that such who doubt, whether the Holy Scripture be of Divine Authority, find not the Power and Efficacy of them upon their own Hearts; for who will regard that which they are ready to believe, is a more deviled Fable, or a Contrivance of Man's own Brain. Some Men in these Days,

do indeed count it but an idle Tale, ^{fully laid down, in my Key to open Scripture Metaphors.} too many Atheistical Wretches are in these Times, and God having left them, withdraws all the Operations of his Sprit from them.

But to proceed,

Argum. I. My first Argument to prove the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, shall be taken from ^{The Sublime Matter of the Scripture, prove they are of Divine Authority.} the Matter contained in them, and their Sublime Style: Certainly this proves they are not of an Humane Product, what Writings carry in them, or discover such amazing Mysteries?

1. What Humane Brain could have imagined a Trinity in the Godhead, or have given such an Account of the manner of God's Existence, or of the Person of the Son of God, in taking our Nature on him, or into Union with his own Divine Person; or would not God have shewed his Abhorrence of such an Attempt long ago: Had the Declaration of those things been the Contrivance of any wicked Man's Brains, certainly Divine Vengeance had been quickly poured out upon such a Person or Persons, who should give a false Account of the Blessed Deity, as existing in the Three Sacred Persons; that so the Generation of the Righteous might not be deceiv'd in, and about the Object of Divine Worship; tho' in many Cases the Patience of God seems wonderful: But such things sure, could not consist with his Truth, Wisdom, Love and Holiness to bear with.

2. The Holy Scripture only gives an Account of the Beginning of the World, which Men by Natural Light have given full Demonstrations, could not be from Eternity, but had a Beginning; but deny the Holy Scriptures to be true, or from God. It is impossible for us to know how they were created, or how long since, or how long God was in creating of it, and all things that are therein; and can it be imagined, that the Holy God would keep Mankind (for whom he made this World) ignorant of this important Matter.

3. The Scripture only gives an Account of Sin, and discovers how, and by whom it came into the World; and unless Men believe the Truth of the Scripture, Men may deny that there is such Evil in it, or that Sinners shall be punished in another for it.

4. What an amazing Account is there given in the Holy Scripture of that Covenant, that was between the Father and the Son before the World was made; and revealed as soon as Man had sinned: Could such Things have ever entered into the Hearts of Men,

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what

what Purity and wonderful Equity, is there contained in every Precept of the Holy Law; and how is the Substance of the Matter contained therein, confirmed by the Light in every Man's Natural Conscience.

4. What a Self-denying Doctrine doth the Scripture bear witness unto, directly opposite to the whole Corporation of Debauched Mankind, being utterly destructive to all Mens Carnal Interest and to all Impiety.

What foolish and imperfect Rules of Life, with the End and Design of a Holy Life are those of *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Tully, Seneca, &c.* when compared to the Holy Scriptures, or the best and wisest of meer Natural Men, who have wrote of Moral and Divine Things,

The Antiquity of the Scripture shews they are of God.

Justin Martyr in his Parænetick to the Greeks. Tertul. 1. Apology cap. 19.

Argum. II. My Second Argument shall be taken from the Antiquity of the Scriptures; the Writings of *Moses* being the first that ever was in the World (next to those wrote by the Finger of God himself on Mount Sinai) this *Justin Martyr* hath fully proved, who lived about One Hundred and Thirty Years after Christ: The same also is most excellently proved by *Tertul. 1. tullian.* And indeed, if the Scripture be not of God, then *Moses* was a Grand Impostor, and the first Religion a meer Counterfeit, and that the Devil set up his Chappel before God built his Church. Since *Moses* Writings contained a Platform of Worship, of any Notice; and given of God himself, and the first that ever the World knew; so that it would follow from hence, that the World's Original, the Fall of Man, and the way of his Recovery, is all a Cheat and Delusion, and the *Jewish* Worship, and all the Sacrifices were Devices of some wicked Man or Men; which is enough to cause all that deny the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures to tremble.

The Majesty and Authoritativeness and Style of the Holy Scripture, shew they are of Divine Original.

Argum. III. Consider the Majesty and Authoritativeness of the Spirit of God speaking in them, and that extraordinary and inimitable Style wherein they are written: The Style of the Sacred Scripture is singular, they teach with Awful Authority, and have peculiar Properties not found in other Writings; it's Simplicity is joyned with Majesty commanding the Veneration of all Serious Men. — Not like the Writings of Men, fill'd with Elaborate Blandishments, or Humane Elegancy that tickle the Ear and Fancy, and relish with the Flesh. Commands here are given forth, and Subjection peremptorily required with great Severity; and no stronger Arguments then the Will of the Law-

maker, Promises made unlikely to be accomplished, yet Assurance of Performance, tho' no other Reason alledged, *But I the Lord have spoken.* — And *Isa. 51. 22.* to encourage against the greatest Difficulties imaginable, that a Man might believe in Hope against Hope, or Things utterly impossible in the Eye of Sense and Reason; nothing is added but *I will come, and Sarah shall have a Son, &c.* — Also the Divinity of the Style may be observed, that without respect of Persons, all Degrees of Men are commanded, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Noble and Ignoble, Kings and Peasants, and such things too most distasteful to their Natures, forbidding what they approve, and promising not Earthly Honour but Everlasting Life, threatening not with Rack and Gibbet, but with Eternal Pains and Torments in Hell-Fire.

Of all Writings in the World, the Sacred Scriptures assume most unto themselves, telling us, *They are the Word of God, the Words of Eternal Life, and given out by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Testimony of Jesus the Faithful Witness.* And that *They shall judge the World, that They are able to make Men wise unto Salvation; that They are the Immortal Seed; their Tenor is, Thus saith the Lord, — and no Conclusion, but The Lord hath spoken, — Hear the Word of the Lord, — He that hath an Ear let him hear.* The Nature, Quality or Composure of the Style and Phrase of the Scripture, we say, is Emphatical and signally different from all Humane Writings. Here's no Apology begging Pardon of the Reader, or insinuating into his good Opinion by the Art of Rhetorick, but a Stately Planness and Mysterious Simplicity. The Scripture so speaketh (saith *Augustine*) *That with the Height of it, it laughs proud and lofty spirited Men to scorn, yet feeds Men of the greatest Knowledge and Understanding, and nourisheth Babes and Sucklings.*

Argum. IV. That Excellent Spirit of Holiness, which every where breathes in, and from the Scriptures, shew whose Framing they are: To this Holiness they most powerfully perswade by amazing Expressions and Commands, *Be ye holy for I am holy; requiring Men to be righteous and holy, and yet to behold themselves filthy, and not to trust to their own inherent Holiness, nor to boast or glory, but to be ashamed and loath themselves, after they have attain'd to the highest Degree, while here in this World they are capable of arriving at, assuring that No Man without Holiness shall see the Lord.* And

Heb. 12. 14.

And yet that their Holiness is none of their Title to Eternal Happiness, but that they must be found in the Righteousness of another, and that their own is but as *Filthy Rags*; yet censuring Men to Eternal Burning, not only for the Outward Acts of Sin, but Inward Lusts of their Hearts: From whence can such pure Streams flow, but from the Fountain of all Perfections: Dost such a Design to advance Holiness and utterly debase Man, look as if it was the Intreague of any polluted and proud Mortals, and which discovers such a way of attaining to Righteousness and Everlasting Happiness, that lies above the Reach, Thoughts, Invention and Comprehension of the wisest of meer Natural Men.

The Harmony of the Scripture, proves they are God's Holy Oracles.

Argum. V. The Sweet and Admirable Agreement, Consent, Dependence and Harmony, that we find in all and every part of the Holy Scripture prove their Divinity (tho' there are so many Books contained in them) and written by so many different Persons of various Conditions, indifferent Ages, in several Places, and in different Languages; yet all agreeing with each other, and every part with the whole; which could not be foreseen or contrived by any Humane Wisdom or Subtilties of Men in Writing any one part thereof: For all the Histories, Prophecies, Promises, Types and Doctrines in an Orderly Connection, tend to promote the same thing, and one admirably subservient to the other; and every Age proves a fresh Interpreter, and reveals to us more and more of this Glorious Concord and Harmony, which could not be the Effect of *Humane Artifice*, nor of any other Cause, but an infinite Comprehension and Fore-sight, and that the several Writers of this Book were in all times guided in what they wrote by the Supreme Wisdom of that one God, who is always constant to himself, and the *Same yesterday, to day, and for ever.*

The Credit and Sincerity of the Penmen of the Holy Scripture, prove they are of God.

Argum. VI. Consider yet further, the Credit and Sincerity of the Penmen of the Sacred Scriptures; for were they not what they pretend to be, viz. The Word of God, and dictated to the Writers thereof by the Spirit of God; it would be the greatest Affront to the Divine Majesty imaginable, and the greatest Cheats towards Mankind, that ever was put upon the World; but if we consider the *Penmen* thereof, we shall find them all of undoubted Credit, and no ways to be suspected of Imposture; some of them being

Kings, and of the deepest Learning, not likely to be guilty of such a mean and base Spirit, as to vent odious Lies and Forgery. Moreover, many of the Prophets, and almost all the Apostles were illiterate Men; of Parts and Education so mean, that of themselves it seems impossible they should write so profoundly, or lay so deep a Contrivance for deluding the World, and as it is incredible, that so many Men of such a Distance, Times, Qualities and Abilities should all agree in the same Imposture, and so harmonize in promoting it: So neither could any Interest, nor Ambition prompt them thereunto; for as in the main Tendency of this Book is to notify Mens Ambition and Lusts; so most of them exposed themselves by publishing these Writings to great Hazards and Persecutions. Many of the Prophets, and almost all the Apostles, being put to Death in maintaining the things asserted and wrote by them; nor have several of them forbore to record their own great Sins, Failings and Imperfections, together with those of their Brethren.

Thus *Moses* relates his own Infidelity, and Averseness to submit to the Extraordinary Call of God. What an Account have we of *Noah* and *Lot*, *Jacob*, *David* and *Solomon*; and *Peter's* great Sins and Falls. Now had the *Penmen* of the Scripture wrote only by a Humane Spirit, or had they been Impostors, before they would have hid or concealed their own, and their Brethrens gross Iniquities; but no doubt those Sins of theirs, were by the Lord left on Record for many grand and good Causes; and one among the rest, might be to support poor Believers, who thro' Temptations may fall foully, and that they might from thence have hope, that the Root of the Matter may be in them, tho' Satan and their own Evil Hearts might be too hard for them.

Argum. VII. My next Argument shall be taken from the Accomplishment, and punctual Accomplishment of the Prophecies of the Scripture to foretell Events, is the Prerogative of God alone. *Let them bring forth (saith Isa. 41. 22. God) what shall happen; or shew us things that are to come hereafter, that we may know them.* — Now my Brethren, the Body of the Scriptures is enlivened with the Spirit of Prophecy (almost) throughout, and what a full and convincing Prophecy is that of *Jacob* (recorded by *Moses*) *Gen. 49. Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh*

Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the People be. This was not fulfilled till near two thousand Years after. — The first Part was made good all along, from the Entrance of the Tribe of *Judah* upon the Government in King *David*, until the going of it off in the Person of *Hircanus*, whom *Herod* slew, as *Josephus* testifies; but when *Herod* a Stranger, and of another Nation, had cut off the House and Line of *Judah* from the Government of the *Jews*, then, and at that very time, *Shiloh*, viz. The long expected *Messiah* punctually came into the World; that by *Shiloh* the *Messiah* was meant, the *Jewish Rabbins* do not deny, which being well considered, one would think might convince the *Jews*, that their *Messiah* is long since come: But however, what a plain and wonderful Confirmation in this Prediction of the Sacred Verity of the Scripture; also I might mention that concerning *Cyrus*, foretold by the Prophet *Isaiah* one Hundred Years before he was born; and how he should conquer *Babylon*, and rebuild the Temple at *Jerusalem*; which came to pass accordingly: As also the *Seventy Years* Captivity of the *Jews* by the *Babylonians*. Moreover, *Daniel's* Prophecy of the *Four Monarchs*, and of the *Fourth* or *Roman Monarch*, which as he foretold, should be so much different from all the other before it, and of the Rise of *Antichrist* signified by the *Little Horn*, *Dan* 7. who should wear out the Saints which the whole World long since hath seen exactly come to pass. And also that of *Daniel's* *Seventy Weeks*, discovering the very Time when the *Messiah* should be cut off, which was punctually fulfilled accordingly: Also, if we come unto the New Testament Times, how fully were the Predictions of our Saviour accomplished, touching the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple: And also

2 Thef. 2. *Paul's* Predictions of the Revelation of the Man of Sin, and *John's* Prophecies in his *Revelations*, of the General Apostacy from the Christian Faith; and the Rise and Tyranny of the Papacy, or the Church of *Rome* under the Name of *Mystery Babylon*; together with the Time of the Beasts Reign for Forty and Two Months, and State of the Witnesses of Christ in *Sackcloth* for One Thousand, Two Hundred and Sixty Years, all these Prophecies do abundantly prove the Truth, and Divine Authority of the Holy Scripture.

Argum. VIII. Those Writings and

Doctrine, that was confirmed by real and wonderful Miracles must needs be of God; but the Books and Doctrine of Canonical Scriptures were so confirmed; what Miracles did *Moses* work by the Finger of God in *Egypt*, and at the Red Sea to confirm the *Jewish Religion*, or the Truth of the Old Testament: And also how amazing were they, wrought by our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, to confirm he was the True *Messias*, and to confirm the Doctrine of Christianity, or the Truths of the New Testament, which as to Matter of Fact none dare or can deny, for those Miracles were not done in a Corner: The very *Turks* deny not the Miracles of our Lord, and *Josephus* makes mention of them in his History of the Wars of the *Jews*. 'When God puts forth his Miraculous Working Power, in the Confirmation of any Word or Doctrine (saith *Reverend Owen*) he avows it to be of and from himself, or to be absolutely and infallibly true, setting the fullest and openest Seal unto it, which Men who cannot discern his Essence or Being, are capable of receiving or discerning, &c. The Worst Enemies of the Christian Religion cannot deny the Miracles wrought by our Blessed Lord. Moreover, Take notice of this, i. e. That the Devil can work no real Miracles, for could he, what Mortal might he not deceive? All the Miracles which he, or his Instruments pretend to work, the Lord calls Lying Wonders; those Miracles in the Primitive Times, *Sirs*, did not soon cease in the Church. For I find, that *Irenaeus* who lived near Two Hundred Years after Christ, declares, that Miracles were not ceased in his Time, but that in the Name of Christ, *The dead were raised, and Devils cast out*, in his Days.

Argum. IX. I might add the Wonderful Preservation of the Holy Scriptures for so many Ages, which indeed seems to me to be none of the least of Miracles, considering what Enemies they have met withal; certainly, if they belonged not to God, as the Author and Parent of them, they had not continued to this Day. For why should God suffer such a Book to remain, and be under his peculiar Care, declaring it self to be of his Dictating, if falsely pretending to his Name and Authority. Many Works of Eminent Men are lost, but the Sacred Bible continues in spite of the Wrath and Malice of Men and Devils: What the Holy God suffer a Book to remain, calling it self *The Word of God*? If it

The Scriptures confirmed by Miracles.

The Preservation of the Scriptures, prove they are of God.

it was not indeed so, before it had been obliterated and blotted out long ago; but since it hath surmounted all Difficulties and Oppositions for so many Generations, and against such unwearyed and Diabolical Attempts, we have no Reason (in the least) to doubt of the certain Verity thereof.

The wonderful Success the Word of God hath had.

Argum. X. The wonderful Success wherewith the Gospel has been attended, might be brought in as another Argument to prove the Divine Authority of the Scripture: How in the *First Ages*, did Christianity prevail and spread it self, notwithstanding the Opposition made against it, by the *Heathen Emperors* and many Cursed *Hereticks*, tho' published by a few weak and illiterate Fishermen and contemptible Instruments; yet it strangely prospered and prevailed (as I may say) against Wind and Tide, Earth and Hell; and what a multitude were brought to the Obedience of the Cross in many Nations.

Judgments fallen on many, who have blasphemed God's Word.

Argum. XI. The fearful Judgments of God inflicted in several Ages, upon many wicked Men, for contemning these Sacred Oracles, might be brought in as a weighty Argument, to prove this great Truth, God having in a dreadful manner cut off some, who have blasphemed his Word and Holy Name, by immediate Death, as approved Histories testify.

The mighty Power Gods Word hath on Mens Hearts.

Argum. XII. The wonderful Power the Writings of the Holy Scripture have had, and still have upon the Hearts of Men, is a forceable Argument to prove they are of Divine Authority; they convince the Conscience, enlighten the Eyes, convert the Soul, stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, kill, and terrifie obstinate Sinners, and comfort the Minds of sorrowful and dejected Saints, manifesting the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, causing the Godly to bear, and endure the greatest Sorrows with the greatest Chearfulness, the unshaken Hopes they give to good Men of a future Glory, and the Horror that thro' them oft-times falls on Wicked Men for fear of Hell, shews they are of God.

The Testimony of the Church & Holy Martyrs.

Argum. XIII. The Faith, Confession and Universal Testimony born to the Truth of the Scriptures, by the Martyrs and Consent of the Godly, and Universal Church in all Ages, is another strong and powerful Argument, for the Confirmation of the Verity of the Holy Scriptures: What Power could support, and bear up the Spirits of the Martyrs in the Flames, testifying to the Truths of the Written Word, save the Mighty Power of God.

Argum. XIV. If the Scripture be not of God they are Humane: viz. *The Holy Scripture not compiled by Men* Complied by Men, and if by Men, either they were godly Men or wicked Men; good or godly Men they could not be, for what is more foul and abominable in Men, than to invent or forge a Book out of their own Brains, and to father it upon the Holy and ever Blessed God: Moreover, there is no Reason to think, they were compiled by wicked Men, for what Impious Wretches would (nay, could) frame such a Book, that promotes such a Holy, Self-denying Life as the Scriptures do; so opposite and contrary to the Natural Interest and Inclinations of all Ungodly Persons.

Argum. XV. To all these I might add, the Divine Testimony of the Spirit upon the Hearts of all the Godly, which unremovably doth establish our Faith, and give us a full Assurance of the Truth of them: Tho' this Testimony is not the formal Reason of our Belief of them, yet it is of such a Nature, that we are wonderfully confirmed hereby; so that neither Men nor Devils can weaken our Confidence, nor alledge any thing to shake our Belief of the Sacred Oracles, because we have the Witness of the Spirit, testifying to our Conscience within, to what they speak and declare without.

The inward Testimony and Witness of the Spirit.

SERMON XX.

LUKE XVI. 31.

And he said, if they will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded tho' one rose from the dead.

I Am upon Proving the Divine Verity and Authory of the Holy Scriptures. I shall proceed to another Argument and Demonstration.

Argum. XVI. If the Scriptures be not the Word of God, then God hath left us no certain Rule at all, either of Faith or Practice; nor is there any way for us to know Truth from Error. The *Papists* say, the Church is the Rule: To which we reply, that the True Church is only known by the Word of God, for Twenty Communities of Men, whose Doctrine and Discipline may directly differ from each other, may each pretend to be the True Church; and if we have no certain Rule, whereby to know

If the Scriptures be not Gods, God hath left us no certain Rule to walk by.

which is the true Church. No Church can be an infallible Rule, but the former is true; *Ergo*, the like I might say (as you will hear by and by) touching immediate Revelation.

He therefore that disowns the Bible to be of Divine Authority, must prove there is some other way to know the true way to Heaven, and the true Worship and Will of God, or else it will follow, that God hath utterly neglected Mankind, in the highest Matter of Importance in the World, which must of Necessity cast the greatest Contempt and Reproach upon the Wisdom, Goodness, Love and Mercy of God to his Creatures imaginable; and if a Man thinks, there is no Certain Rule, then he doth not only give the Lye to the Christian and Jewish Religion; but generally to all Religion that has been or is in the World, all may be false or a Counterfeit: But that Infinite Wisdom and Goodness should deal thus, is absurd and unreasonable to conceive, and most abominable.

Argum. XVII. The Doctrines and Matters of Fact recorded in the Scripture if true, then it's Divine Original cannot be doubted of: But many things spoken of in the Scripture as to Matter, are not only avouched by its own Votaries, but divers things contained therein are acknowledged by its Enemies: As to instance in a few Particulars. The Creation of the World is intimated by *Ovid*, the long Lives of Men in the first Age of the World by *Manetho* the Egyptian; *Berosus* the Caldean and others: The Flood also is mentioned by the same *Berosus*, whose Words are recited by *Josephus*; also *Noah* is mentioned under the Notion of Bifronted *Jannus*, because he lived in both Worlds, by *Berosus* and *Herodotus*. We read also of the Ark in *Polybysor*, and of the Destruction of *Sodom*. We read in *Pliny* that there was such a Man as *Moses*, and a People called *Israelites*, whom he was Captain of, and led out of *Egypt*; is testified by the most ancient Records of the *Egyptians*, *Caldeans* and *Grecians*; and also *Manetho* speaks particularly of the *Israelites* coming in, and going out of *Egypt*. Of the coming of the *Israelites* into *Canaan*. See *Procopius*. Of *Solomon* we read in *Dionysius*, *Cassius*. And *Tacitus* the great Roman Historian, speaks of the Persecution of the Christians by *Nero*. The Star that appeared at the Birth of our Saviour, is taken Notice of by *Pliny*, and also by *Calcidius* an Hea-

then Phylosopher. The Slaughter of the Infants by *Herod*, is recorded by *Macrobius*. Moreover, *Josephus* gives an Account of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Whom he calls a Man (if it be faith he, lawful to call him a Man) 'For he was a Worker of great Miracles, 'and a Teacher of such that received the Truth, &c.

The same Thing is also spoken by *Lentulus*, in his Epistle to the Emperor *Tiberius*, recited by *Eutropius* in these Words, 'There hath appeared 'in our Days, and yet is living a Man 'of great Vertue or Power, named 'Jesus Christ; Who is called of the 'Nations the Prophet of Truth, whom 'his Disciples call the Son of God, 'a Raifer of the Dead, and an Healer 'of all manner of Diseases. Now how unreasonable a Thing is it, for Men to give Credit to the Truth of many Humane Histories, and Matter of Fact that never was so confirmed, as the Sacred Scriptures have been; and yet boldly dare deny, or doubt of the Divine Authority or Truth of this Book.

But to proceed,

Secondly, I shall endeavour to prove, that the Holy Scriptures in the Ministration thereof, hath far more Efficacy attending it, to bring Men to believe and repent, than immediate Revelation, or Apparition from the Dead, &c.

1. For the Proof and Demonstration of this great Truth, I shall shew you the Uncertainty of the Evidence of all other pretended Ways, particularly that of immediate Revelation.

1. Suppose a Man pretends to immediate Inspiration or Revelation, by which he says he knows the Truth, or the only way to be saved; and how to worship God. How can we be assured, that what he says is a true and infallible Revelation. For perhaps Twenty Men, who may all teach contrary Doctrine one to the other, yet all pretend to immediate Revelation, or Inspiration of God; how shall any Enquiring and Doubting Person be assured, which of these are truly inspired; one may say, I witness it in my self, and know it is of God. Well, and so may another of them say, and so all; and how then is the doubting Person left at an utter Uncertainty.

For unless one or another of this sort, who pretends to immediate Inspiration can do that, or such Things to confirm his Mission; which no Impostor can pretend unto, or do the like, he is not in the least to be regarded, in what he says or teaches from such a Spirit.

Quest.

Ovid in his Metamorphosis. lib. 1.

Antiqui. lib. 1. cap. 4. See my Key, part 2. to open Scripture Metaphors. Pliny lib. 5 cap. 16.

Procop. lib. 4. Tacitus in his Annals. lib. 15.

Pliny, lib. 2 cap. 5.

Now extant in Bibliotheca Patrum.

The Uncertainty of immediate Inspiration.

Quest. What must he do?

Ans. He must work real Miracles, as to raise the Dead, and open the Eyes of such that were born blind, by that Spirit he pretends to be led; and if he cannot do such things, he can do no more, than any grand Deceiver, or Impostor can pretend unto.

2. Moreover, pray consider that Almighty God himself, who is a *Free Agent*, and is under no Obligation to his Creatures, never gave forth but two Religions, or two Sorts of Publick Worship, Laws and Ordinances, (the first was the *Jewish Religion*, and the Second the *Christian Religion*) and neither of these he imposed on his People, without confirming them by Signs and Wonders.

The first was given forth by *Moses*, and pray what amazing Miracles and Wonders did he work in *Egypt* before *Pharaoh*, and at the *Red Sea*, to prove his Mission; or that he was sent of God, and such that none could do the like: Tho' *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood him, and strove to do the like things, but at last were forced to cry out, it was the *Finger of God*. Moreover, when the Time of the *Jewish Worship*, and their Church-state was expiring, and our Lord was sent from Heaven, to give forth the Doctrine and Worship of the New Testament. And what wonderful Miracles did he work, to prove he was sent from Heaven; he also said, *If I work not the Works that no other Man can do, believe me not*. And again he saith, *The Works that I do, they bear witness of me*. They proved that the Father sent him, and that his Doctrine was of God, — Or

Joh. 14. 11

3. Suppose a Man should say he is come from the Dead, either from Heaven or Hell; who will believe him, he may be an Impostor, a Liar, he is not to be regarded, unless he works Miracles; and to confirm what he says, he must raise the Dead, and open the Eyes of such that were born blind, or such like wonderful Works which no Deceiver can do; for the Devil, and all Lying Spirits can work no real Miracles, no, they are all Lying Signs and Wonders, for were not this so, the World were left in a woeful Condition: Besides, then the Miracles our Lord wrought, could be no infallible Evidence, that he was the Son of God and sent by him, and his Doctrine was from Heaven.

The Devil
can work
no real
Miracles.

4. Moreover, suppose one should really come from the Dead, and preach to Sinners, and tell them what they

should do to be saved; yet his Testimony would be only the Testimony of a meer Humane Creature; but the Sacred Scriptures are the Word of God, *All Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God*. Nay, the Doctrine of the Gospel, or Word of the New Testament was spoken by Christ himself, the Son of God from Heaven; he in his own Person, and with his own Mouth gave it forth, as he received it from the Father, and confirmed it by Wonderful Miracles: And now which should we soonest believe, or is of the greatest Authority, what the Son of God himself spake, or what an Humane Spirit should declare.

5. But the Grand Argument is this, viz: That Way, or that Word, or that Means, which God hath ordained or appointed, (as the ordinary and most effectual Way or Means) for the Conversion of Sinners, or to bring them to believe and repent; hath a Great and Divine Power and Efficacy in it yea, above all; or any other Way or Means whatsoever to effect that great End. But God hath ordained or appointed the Sacred Scriptures as read, especially as preached by his Faithful Ministers, as the Ordinary and most Effectual Way or Means for the Conversion of Sinners, or to bring them to believe and repent, therefore the Scriptures as so read and preached, hath a Real and Divine Power and Efficacy in it, above all or any other Way or Means whatsoever, to effect that great End. Will God leave his own Ordinance, and own an Ordinance of Man's devising, or cause that to succeed to answer the great End proposed by himself in his own Institution; no, no, the Rich Man in Hell magnifies the *Apparition of a Spirit*; concluding that what one that riseth from the dead might declare, would have more Effect upon his Five Brethren, than the Written Word. But,

Certainly, that Way and Means God hath ordained to such or such an End, he will bless and own, for the effecting his own gracious Design and Purpose, above any Way or Means else. Now for the Confirmation of this Argument, see what the Apostle *John* saith, *Many other Signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book. But these are written that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name*. The Reason why the Doctrine and Miracles of our Blessed Saviour are written in the Book of the New

2 Tim. 3.
16.
Heb. 1.
1, 2.

The great
Argument
to prove
the Written
Word of
God, as
read and
preached, is
the most ef-
fectual way
Means to
bring Sin-
ners to be-
lieve.

Joh. 20.
30, 31.

New Testament, is that we might believe; this is the Way and Means God hath ordained to this great End, compared with *Rom. 10. 14, 15. How shall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* — and how shall they preach except they are sent. (1.) Note, that Faith comes by Hearing the Gospel preached, as the ordinary Way God hath ordained. (2.) That they must be such that preach it, whom God hath ordained and sent. Now either he hath ordained *Mortal Men* to preach it, or *Angels*, or else the *Spirits of Men* who are dead; but God hath not ordained his *Angels* to preach it, nor the *Spirits of Men* that are dead; therefore he hath ordained and sent *Mortal Men*, whom he hath gifted to that End, to be the *Preachers* thereof: Besides, Matter of Fact puts it out of all doubt, for nothing is more evident than this, that *Mortal Men* were chosen, gifted, ordained and sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the only *Ministers* or *Preachers* of the Gospel. First he chose his *Twelve Disciples*, and sent them forth to preach it, and afterwards he sent out the *Seventy*. — And when they went away he said to them, *Behold I send you the Promise of my Father, but tarry in the City of Jerusalem, until you are endued with Power from on High.* Also it is said, *When he ascended up on high, he gave Gifts to Men.* — Not to *Angels*, nor to the *Spirits of the Dead*. And he gave some *Apostles*, and some *Prophets*, and some *Evangelists*, and some *Pastors* and *Teachers*. The first had an extraordinary Mission and Call, such Offices as *Apostles*, and *Extraordinary Prophets*, and *Evangelists* none can pretend to have since the *Extraordinary Gifts* ceased; but *Pastors* and *Teachers* remain in the Church to the End of the World, who preach by Vertue of those Gifts Christ received and gave, when he ascended up on High, and hath left Rules how *Pastors* should be qualified, and how both *Pastors* and *Teachers* should receive their Ordinary and Regular Call, and so be sent by the Church.

6. That Word which is more sure than in the Voice, that came from the *Excellent Glory in the Holy Mount*, must needs be of the greatest Authority, and most powerful Efficacy attending it, to bring Men to believe, &c. But the Holy Scriptures is a more sure Word, than the Voice that

came from the most *Excellent Glory in the Holy Mount*; Ergo, The Holy Scripture is of the greatest Authority, and hath most Power and Efficacy in it to bring Men to believe, &c. For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *Ey-witnesses* of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the *Excellent Glory*; This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. — And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the *Holy Mount*. We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shines in a dark Place until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your Hearts. — Well, and what is that more sure Word? See the next Verse, *Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of Scripture, is of any private Interpretation, &c.*

Know this first, viz. The Rule of your Faith and Practice; or first and principally above all Things, as the Great Article of your Faith, that the Holy Scripture is of Divine Authority, and is to be preferred above that Glorious Voice heard in the Mount; and so far above all pretended Visions, new Inspirations, Spirits, or any other Way or Means whatsoever, that any can pretend unto: And that this Doctrine contained therein, and as a sure Rule, remains until Christ the Day (or Morning) Star comes in his Glory, when our Hearts shall be perfectly illuminated, or that which is perfect is come, and that no One Place of the Scriptures is to be interpreted by Mens own Spirits, or is of any private Interpretation, contrary to what is confirmed by other Scriptures; God being the Author of it, all agrees and sweetly harmonize, tho' thro' the Ignorance of Men, and by the Delusions of Satan, some understand them not, and others wrest them to their own Destruction; but not that we are to conceive, no Man is to interpret the Scriptures, unless he hath received extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, or the Knowledge of the Tongues; for the Scripture may be understood of the Ignorant (as the *Ancients* well observe) who have but the ordinary Gifts of the Spirit; by comparing one Scripture with another; for the Scripture it self, is the Best Interpreter of the Scripture.

7. If

Mat. 10. 12

Luke 10. 1

Luke 24. 49.

Eph. 4. 8, 11.

2 Pet. 1. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Serm. XX. *The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.* 117

Many Thousands have been converted by Preaching the Word.

7. If we read of many Thousands, that have been converted by Preaching the Gospel, or by the unerring Word of God or his Sacred Oracles; and not one converted by the Spirit of any of the Dead, or by any Spirit whatsoever, teaching directly contrary to those Sacred Oracles; or not adhering or referring to them by pretended Immediate Inspiration; then the Scriptures, or the Preaching of God's written Word hath the only Authority and Efficacy in it thro' the Spirit of Christ (which always teaches according to it) but we read of Thousands this Way converted, and not of one converted by the Spirit of any came from the dead, nor by immediate Inspiration; or by a Spirit that teacheth directly contrary to those Sacred Oracles; or not adhering or referring to them. *Ergo,*

Acts 2.44, 42, 44.

Isa. 8. 20.

There is no certain Rule left us of Faith, &c. If the Scripture are not that Rule.

My Brethren, Such who pretend that they were converted by any Spirit, Light, or Inspiration of or by any Spirit, that speak not according to this Word, it is a Lying Spirit and no Light is in them; but that they are certainly deluded and deceived by the Devil.

8. If the Holy Scripture be not the certain Way and Means of Faith and Practice, or of Faith and Repentance; then God hath (as I before hinted) left us no certain Rule, Way or Means at all, and besure that cannot stand consistent with the Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, Pity, Honour and Faithfulness of the Holy God. If any say God hath left a certain Rule for our Faith, Practice and Conversion: Besides, the Scriptures let them prove it, by such Evidences that are infallibly certain, that no Man led thereby can be deceived. I deny not, but God may convert Men by Afflictions, &c. but what tho' yet he makes use still of the Written Word in the Light and Promises thereof, tho' it may not be by Preaching.

9. If no Man or Spirit is to be regarded, unless they speak according to this Word, viz. The Written Word of God; then the Holy Scripture is the only Rule and Ordinary Means, answering the Great End pleaded for: But that this is so, see *Isa. 8. 19, 20.* And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar Spirits, and unto Wizards that peep and mutter; should not People seek unto their God? &c. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.

The Holy Scripture every Ways sufficient thro' Faith in Christ.

10. If the Holy Scriptures thro' Faith are every ways sufficient, in respect of Faith, Practice and Salvation; then the Holy Scripture hath the only Efficacy in them for this great End,

but that this is so, see what the Apostle says, *That from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable, for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness — that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* And now *My Brethren,* What is further necessary that the Scriptures fail in, to any one that believes in Jesus, I see not.

Lastly, I might add that the Personal Ministry of our Saviour could it be enjoyed again (as one notes) it would be ineffectual to them, whom the Written Word hath none Effect, *Had you believed Moses you would have believed me, but if you believe not his Writings, how shall you believe my Words?* O how doth our Lord magnifie the Written Word? There is the same Reason, why Christ's Word should not be believed, by such that believed not *Moses* Writings, who confirmed his Mission with Miracles as our Saviour did his: You therefore, that despise the Written Word of God, should Christ come again and preach to you (in such a State and Condition as he appeared in when on Earth) you would despise him, or not believe in him.

Thirdly, *How should the Sacred Oracles, or the Holy Gospel be heard?*

Ans. 1. As it is indeed the Word of God, or Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ; you that hear it as only being the Word of Man, it is no Wonder you profit not by it. See how *Paul* commended the *Believing Thessalonians*; *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God, which you heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God, which effectually also worketh in you that believe.* The Apostles preach the Gospel, and that Word or Doctrine they preached he saith truly, is the Word of God, and as being such we should hear it.

2. With Prayer, or joyn Prayer with Hearing, for the Holy Spirit to accompany it; for unless the Holy Spirit works with the Word, it will not be effectual to them that hear it, God must open the Heart, and work Faith in the Heart, or bless the Word with the Divine Influences of his Spirit.

3. With all Diligence and Holy Awe and Reverence, *I stand in Awe of thy Word,* saith *David*; and the Lord saith to this Man, *I will look — that trembleth at my Word.* It is by the Word we shall be judged at the Great

G g Day.

Day. Nothing should divert our Thoughts while we are under the Word, but attend upon it with our utmost Diligence. Some think it is enough if they hear the Word, tho' they never regard how their Hearts wander abroad, like the *Eyes of a Fool to the Ends of the Earth*; whilst they hear it, and others perhaps sit and sleep, whilst the Word of Life is preached to them.

4. *With all Endeared Love and Affections*: If we love not the Word, how should we profit by it, it will not be a Burden to him who esteems it above God. *O how love I thy Law?* We should prize it above our necessary Food, and hunger for it, love and esteem it, as a Hungry Man loves and hungers for Bread, prizes and esteems Bread; so should our Souls hunger for the Word of God.

Psa. 119.
11.

5. *With a full Purpose of Heart*, to receive it, to *Hide it in our Hearts*, not only receive it into our Ears and Heads, but into our Hearts, into our Understandings and Affections; and so also have our Wills bowed to the Authority and Power thereof, and retain the Savour of it in our Memories, and with a firm Resolution to yield all due ready, hearty and present Obedience to it: We must believe the Promises, obey the Precepts, and fear the Threatnings of the Word.

Heb. 4. 2.

Jer. 16.

2 Chron.
20. 20.

6. *Believing*: If we do not mix Faith with the Word it will not profit us, we must feed upon the Word, *Thy Words were found, and I did eat them*; the Word of God is the Food of the Soul, *And thy Word was to me the Joy, and the Rejoycing of my Heart*: This was *Jehoshaphat's* Advice to the People of *Israel*, *Believe in the Lord your God. — And believe his Prophets so shall you prosper*. Some will not, do not so much as give such Humane Credence to the Word of God, as they give to Humane Histories; if they did, durst they persist in sinful Ways as they do, whereas the Word pronounceth Wrath and Divine Vengeance on all ungodly Men, and shews that Swearers, Drunkards, Unclean Persons, Liars, and all that live in any known Sin or Course of Wickedness, or believe not in Christ, shall be damned; or such who are not born again.

1 Cor. 6.
9, 10.
Mark 16.
16.

Joh. 3: 3.

APPLICATION.

1. I infer, that such who cast Contempt upon the Word of God, and magnifie any Spirit, Rule, or Light that some pretend is in all Men)

above the Holy Scripture are deceived by Satan, and are in a fearful Condition, and are greatly to be pitied.

2. It reproves such that neglect Reading and Hearing the Word of God, and it may inform us, that the Reason why some Men are not converted, it is alas! because they attend not upon that Means, which God hath appointed to that great End.

3. Moreover, it may inform us, why Some who do hear God's Word profit not; Alas, they hear it not as it is truly the Word of God, nor attend upon it with Diligence, with Faith, and Godly Reverence, the Voice of the Minister of Christ is God's Voice, or the Voice of Jesus Christ; but this they believe not, *They that receive you receive me, saith our Lord*; Ministers are God's Ambassadors, by whom he offers Terms of Peace, and a Marriage with his Son. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20.

4. It may inform us, what a Mercy and Blessing it is to have the Holy Scriptures, or the Sacred Oracles, and what a Loss and dismal Judgment it would be, should God take the Ministration of the Gospel from us, or bring upon us a Famine of the Word. The Glory of *England* lies in this, it enjoys the Light of God's Word, *Tis a Land of Vision*; but if should God take from it the Gospel, it would soon become a Land of Darkness, no Judgment as I have shewn in Opening another Parable, is like to such a Judgment as many in our Neighbouring Nation find by Woeful Experience. See the Parable of the Vineyard let to Husbandmen opened, Mat. 21.

5. O let us highly prize the Word of God, and beware of Satan's Designs now on Foot, in labouring to render it of little Worth or Value, by stirring up some to magnifie Natural Religion above that Holy Religion revealed in the Blessed Gospel of our Dearest Lord, and in stirring up others to cry up the Light in all Men, as the only Rule of Faith and Practice, and their Foolish and Erronious Books above the Sacred Bible. *God hath magnified his Word above all his Name*, Tho' perhaps Incarnate the Word may chiefly be meant thereby, yet what way of Revelation of God to his Creatures hath God magnified, as he hath his written Word, as God's Name by which he is made known; for all other ways by which he is made known to us, fall short of that Revelation we have of him in his Word.

6. Prize and Esteem the Messengers or Ministers of God's Word, for tho' they are but Instruments in God's Hand, yet it is by them and thro' their Word, we come to believe, *Who then is Paul*, 1 Cor. 3: 5. and

Ver. 6. *and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, as the Lord gave to every Man; but O let us look beyond Ministers, unto God; who is the Great and Only Agent of all Divine Operations, I have planted and Apollos watered but God gave the Increase.*

Now to conclude and close with this Parable, Let us all learn from hence, to bless God that hath afforded us the best and most effectual Way and Means to believe in him, and to turn our Souls from our Evil Ways, that

so we might be Eternally saved; and let none once think in their Hearts, that if God would Send one from the dead, to preach unto them; that they then should be perswaded to leave their sinful Ways and receive Jesus Christ, or that that would be a more effectual Means to awaken them, and work upon their Hearts and Consciences. For *If they will not believe Moses and the Prophets (or Christ's written Word and his Apostles) neither will they be perswaded tho' one rose from the dead.*

The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.

SERMON I.

LUKE XVIII. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Two Men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican, ver. 10.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican. ver. 11.

I fast twice a Week, I give Tithes of all I possess, ver. 12.

And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his Breasts, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner. ver. 13.

I tell you, this Man went to his House, rather justified than the other, for every one that exaleth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted: ver. 14.

The Occasion of Christ's speaking this Parable.

THE Occasion of our Saviour's speaking of this Parable is expressed in the precedent Verse, *And he spake this Parable unto certain which trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others.* So that the Design or Scope thereof is,

The Scope of the Parable.

1. To discover the sad and fearful State of all self-righteous Persons, or such that trust in their own Righteousness.

2. To make known the Frame of a Persons Spirit that is justified in God's sight, viz. One brought to the Foot of God, being humbled thro' the Sight and Sense of his Sin, and so a self-condemned Sinner: Moreover, it might be to inform us, what great Encouragement there is, for great Sinners to fly to the Mercy of God; and that it is not only the Duty of Sinners to pray, but to let us know God regardeth their Prayers, who are under the Sense and Conviction of Sin, when he rejects the Prayers and Worship of self-righteous Persons.

But to proceed,

First, In this Parable we have mention made of Two Men, and also who they were or what sort of Men; viz.

The Parts opened.

1. One was a Pharisee.
2. The Other a Publican.

Secondly, We have an Account of what they did, viz. *They went up into the Temple to pray.*

As all the Families of Jacob, were to discharge the Duty of Prayer in their Dwelling-Places; so likewise they were enjoined to pray, and worship God in the Temple, God having promised to hear the Prayers that were made in that Place.

The Pharises were a strict sort of People amongst the Jews; but tho' they seemed to be very devout, yet were guilty of great Hypocrisie, and very Vain-glorious, doing what they did to be seen of Men, against whom our Lord denounced many bitter Woes.

Who the Pharises were.

The Publicans were Tole-Gatherers, being such that collected Caesar's Tribute,

Who the Publicans were.

bute, and were greatly hated of the Jews.

1. Because they were Servants to the Romish Emperors, whose Yoke the Jews could not abide.

2. Because they were generally very loose, or prophane Persons, extorting from the People more than their Due, to enrich themselves; there were some who were Masters of the Society of the Publicans; and it is thought that Zacheus was one of them, because he is said to be Chief of the Publicans, but tho' they were great Sinners, yet divers of them were converted, and became the Disciples of Jesus Christ; the Evangelist Matthew was a Publican, before he was called to be an Apostle. Moreover, we read that the Publicans were so hated by the Jews, that tho' they were of their own Nation, yet they would not suffer them to marry with their Daughters.

These Two Men (it appears) differed very much the one from the other; one was a Zealous Professor, and the other a Prophane and an Ungodly Sinner, — yet both went to the Temple to pray and worship God.

Thirdly, We have a Relation of both their Gestures, and Manner of their Devotion.

1. The Pharisee stood and prayed: Standing in Prayer is not condemned by our Lord, it was used by Good Men, as well as Kneeling; but perhaps the Pharisee stood to be seen of Men, with his Hands and Eyes lifted up towards Heaven, that all might see that he prayed, for may be his Voice at this time was not heard.

He prayed with himself: Intimating as if he did not speak out with a loud Voice at this time, which at other times the Pharisees and all Pharisaical Persons were ready enough to do, that others might hear them; but it seem'd to be a strange kind of Prayer, we find not one Petition he put up to God, or asked any thing.

Godly Persons in Prayer always make Supplication to God, for what they want, as well as give God Thanks for what they have. He prayed thus, God I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, &c. I grant that Thanksgiving is part of Prayer, but certainly all sincere Persons, when they pray have something to desire of God, some Request to put up by way of humble Supplication to God for what they want, as well as to give Thanks for what they have received of him; but the Pharisee it is like, saw no want of any thing glorying in himself, and in his own Righteousness, and commending himself to God; whereas nothing is indeed more hate-

ful and abominable in the Sight of God than so to do, and such (as our Saviour saith) shall be abased.

2. We have also an Account of the Gesture of the Poor Publican. (1.) His standing afar off. (2.) Not daring to lift up his Eyes unto Heaven. (3.) He smote upon his Breast. (4.) Saying God be merciful to me a Sinner.

Fourthly, We have an Account how successful this Man's Prayer was, and how unsuccessful the others; or of the Acceptance of the Publican, and the Rejection of the Pharisee, I tell you this Man went to his House rather justified, than the other.

Fifthly, An Intimation from whence it was the Pharisee was rejected; and an Account of the Frame of the others Spirit that was accepted and justified; i. e. The one exalted himself, was proud and conceited, and therefore abhorred of God, and shall be abased: Proud Persons abhorred of God. The other was of a humble, lowly and broken Frame of Heart, he was accepted, and shall be exalted; signifying that God justifies and exalts all whom he doth justify, only in a way of Free-grace, and that all such whom he doth accept, pardon and justify, are sensible Sinners, broken-hearted and self-condemned Sinners. But to proceed,

Note,

Doct. 1. That all Pharisaical and Self-righteous Persons God rejects, and will cast off for ever.

Doct. 2. That a justified Person looks upon himself, with Abhorrence, or sees himself as in himself, a woful, lost, and an undone Sinner.

In speaking to the first of these Propositions, I shall

1. Give you the Character of this Pharisee, and in him of all Self-righteous Persons.

2. Shew you from whence they justify themselves, and why God rejects them, and their Condition is so dismal.

1. The Pharises were Hypocrites, they did all they did in Religious Matters to be seen of Men: I do not say they were all so without Exception, some might act out of a Principle of Moral Sincerity, as certainly Paul did when he was a Pharisee; but generally our Saviour condemns them for Hypocrites: Woe to you Scribes and Pharises, Hypocrites, they did all to be seen of Men or for Vain-glory sake, and therefore were Hypocrites. And this appears in respect of three Religious Duties per-

The Pharises were Hypocrites.

performed by him, viz. Giving of Alms, Prayer and Fasting.

The Hypocrite of the Pharisees in giving of Alms.
Mat. 6. 2. 1. In their giving of Alms they blow'd a Trumpet: Therefore when thou dost thy Alms do not sound a Trumpet, as Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets that they may have Glory of Men: When they purposed to give Alms to the poor, they caused one to sound a Trumpet, not to call the poor to them, but to let all Men know what Religious and Charitable Persons they were.

The Hypocrite of the Pharisees in Praying.
Mat. 6. 5. 2. When they prayed, they did it to be seen of Men; this our Blessed Lord also charged them with and condemned them for: And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men; Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward. They stood up in the Synagogue, in such Places that all might see them when they prayed, and would get into some Corners of the Streets merely out of Ostentation, that they be thought to be more Holy, and Devout Persons than any others. My Brethren, I never approved for such, who in their Families pray so loud, as that such that go by their Houses in the Street may hear them: For if it doth not favour of Hypocrisy, I am sure it doth betray their Folly and Weakness; because it opens the Mouths of all that hear them to censure them for Hypocrites; therefore our Saviour directs us, When we pray, to enter into our Closets, and shut the Door. Tho' in Family-Prayer where People live in Rooms next to the Streets, possibly (tho' they speak low) yet their Voices may be heard, and they not reprobable; but let us all look well to our Hearts, Ends and Aims.

The Hypocrite of the Pharisees in ye fast.
Mat. 6. 16. 3. In Fasting also the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees appeared, Moreover when ye fast, be not as the Hypocrites, of a sad Countenance, for they disfigure their Faces, that they may appear to Men to fast; Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward. But when ye fast anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face, &c.

Quest. Some (perhaps) may say, Why do we not do thus when we fast, since our Saviour directs us thus to do?

Ans. Should we do thus, it might in a little time favour of as great Hypocrisy in us, as it did in the Pharisees to disfigure their Faces; because it being not a Custom amongst the People of this Nation, to anoint their Heads, &c. anointing the Head, and causing the Face to shine amongst the Jews was a Sign of Joy, and to put on Sackcloth,

and disfigure the Countenance, and look demurely, was a Sign of great Sorrow; but neither of these are used in these Northern Countries: Therefore where that Action or Practice is used, it would have quite different Effects, the Use of it is not, ought not to be complied with; for whatsoever may favour of Hypocrisy or vain Ostentation is utterly condemned by our Saviour in these Places.

II. The Pharisees only made clean the outside, i. e. strove only to keep their outward Conversation unspotted, and took no Care to have their Hearts washed from Sin and Filthiness, Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for you make clean the outside of the Cup and of the Platter, that the outside of them may be clean. They were outwardly holy but inwardly wicked. And hence our Lord compares them to Painted or Whited Sepulchres, which appeared beautiful outwardly, but were within full of Extortion and Excess, or all manner of Filthiness and Pollution. Thus this Pharisee cries, God I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, nor as this Publican; that is, not outwardly prophane and wicked, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, &c. But tho' they did not perhaps appear to Men to be Unjust, &c. yet by what our Lord shews, they deceived themselves in that respect, for he charges them for devouring of Widows Houses, Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye devour Widows Houses, and for a pretence make long Prayers. Their Practice (it seems) was to perswade Widows under specious Pretences to give their Estates when they dyed to them, to the Service of the Tabernacle, they making long Prayers for them.

III. They gloried much in Negative Holiness being not prophane Persons, tho' it is true, Personal Holiness partly consisteth in departing from Sin, or outward Acts of Wickedness; yet not chiefly from the outward Act, but from the Love of it, and evil Habits also; which Inherent, Negative Holiness they never arrived at.

IV. They were much also in some Acts of Positive Holiness; I fast twice a Week, they prayed you heard often, and were frequent in the Publick Worship of God in the Temple and Synagogues, and paid Tithes, or their Tenths to the Priests as God under the Law commanded; but pray Note that all Pharisaical Persons chiefly shew their Zeal in a constant Performance of the Outward Acts of Worship, they were for the easiest Part, but the more

hard Parts of Religion, they would not put forth their Finger to do, what People are more zealous at their Publick Devotion, than the *Papists* and *Common Protestants*? they will be at their Publick Worship (may be) twice, or thrice a Day, and say over a great many Prayers, but it is all done from false Principles, and in Shew only.

V. The Pharises, and all Self-righteous Persons have a Self-fulness in them, they are not poor in Spirit, nor do they see any need to confess their Sins to God, no, they see not that they are Sinners, but righteous

Prov. 30. 12. Persons. *There is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, yet are not washed from their Wickedness: They are increased in Goods, and have need of nothing, but are the People the Prophet speaks of, Stand by thy self, come*

Isa. 65. 5. *not near me, for I am more holy than thou — (saith the Lord) These are a Smoak in my Nose, a Fire that burneth all the Day. A great Conceit of a Man's own Righteousness, of his Knowledge, Parts, Learning or Self-fulness is the Character of a Pharisaical Person, the Pharisee confesseth no Sin to God, he asketh not for Pardon, nor cries for Mercy.*

VI. They expected to be justified by their own Righteousness before God, and see no need they have of any other Righteousness to be found in at God's Bar; not doubting but by their own Obedience to the Law, and the Precepts thereof they shall be saved; as many among us think, by keeping the Ten Commandments (tho' they break them many times in a Day) and by conforming to the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel, they shall be justified in God's Sight and saved when they dye; never being convinced of the Want they have of the Righteousness of Christ (to be clothed with that) and to cast of in point of Trust all their own.

VII. They were always more strict and zealous (as I hinted) for the smaller Matters of the Law, than the more weighty things thereof, and made a great Stir about Days, Meats, Drinks, Garbs, Dresses, &c. but neglected Judgment, Justice, Mercy, Faith and the Love of God.

VIII. They were such whose Eyes were more abroad than at home, could sooner see a Mote in their Brother's Eye, than see the Beam that was in their own Eye. This is the Character of an Hypocrite, *And why beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye. — Thou Hypocrite first cast out the*

Beam that is in own Eye, and then thou wilt see clearly to cast out the Mote, that is in thy Brother's Eye. It is notorious Wickedness to censure, and condemn others for this or that Fault, when we are guilty of worse our selves, indeed we should take heed that we do not judge others at all, nor censure them unless they are found guilty of a palpable Violation of God's Law, or of the Rules of the Gospel and good Order, *Who art thou that judgest thy Brother?* So much as to the first Thing proposed.

Secondly, *I shall shew you from whence it is, that they justify themselves, and God rejects all self-righteous Persons, and so their State is so dismal.*

I. It is from their Ignorance of God. *The Cause or Reasons, why the Pharises justified themselves, and so of their woful State and Condition.* (1.) They know not the Rectitude of his Nature nor pure Holiness, who is of such pure Eyes that he abhorreth all who have the least Stain of Sin in them, nor can any stand before him in Judgment who have sinned: If a Man be justified with God, it must be by a perfect, spotless Righteousness, but this the Pharises saw not. (2.) They were (and such Persons still are) ignorant of the Eternal Counsels and Purpose of God in Jesus Christ. (3.) They were ignorant of the Holy Law of God, thinking if they keep the External Precept, so as not to break the Law in the Letter of it, they might be justified by the Righteousness thereof; not seeing that by the secret Lusts of their Hearts they violated the Law every Day, and that the Justice and Holiness of God required Satisfaction for the former Breach of it. *They being ignorant of God's Righteousness, went about to establish their own Righteousness.* Paul himself when a Pharisee was without the Law, that is without the true Knowledge of it. Rom. 10. 3

II. It was because they knew not Jesus Christ, nor the End and Design of God's sending his Son into the World, to take our Nature into Union with his own Divine Person; they knew not why he was made under the Law, and therefore he lived in an exact Conformity to the Precepts of it, nor wherefore he dyed the Cursed Death of the Cross; they thought their *Messiah* when he came, would appear like a Glorious King in outward Glory and Grandeur, to save them from all their Enemies, and so only a Law-giver; and not to work out a Righteousness by his Obediences and Sufferings to justify such that believed in him, and since they were ignorant of this, how

Mark 16. how could they believe in him, and so be justified by him, *But he that believeth not shall be damned*; that is, that doth not fly to Christ to be justified; and indeed (as I have often told you) we have them in and about this City and Nation, who look upon Christ to be little more than a *Law-giver*. One that hath purchased a mild Law of Grace, of Faith and Obedience, by living up to which, they expect to be justified before God, even and so far as they do obey in Sincerity, so far they think they are justified; which Error I have in Opening of other Parables fully confuted.

Rom. 3. 21, 22, 23. III. They justified themselves, by reason they knew not what a fearful State they and all the Jews (as well as the Gentiles) were in; *For there being no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.* All being under the Guilt of Original Sin, and all under the Breach of the first Covenant, and all the Children of Wrath by Nature. Alas! the Pharisee saw not this, he look'd upon his State very good, tho' he thought the State of the *Publican* was bad; but *Paul* shews *All were gone out of the way, &c. and that by the Deeds of (that broken) Law no Flesh could be justified in God's sight.*

Joh. 3. 1, 2, 3. IV. They saw not any Necessity of Regeneration, or if a Changed Heart, nor could they attain thereunto without the Spirit, and true Faith in Jesus Christ: How ignorant of this was *Nicodemus* (tho' a Master in Israel) and yet our Saviour shews, that *Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: And hence their State was so miserable, they thought a Reformed Life from Gross Acts of Sin and Wickedness was sufficient to save them, as too many do now adays.

Mat. 9. 12. V. Because they looking upon themselves righteous, whole, or for such who saw no need of a Physician; they were such a People as Christ came not to call: *The whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*; but such sort of Sinners the Pharises were not, they knew not that *God would have Mercy and not Sacrifice*: And hence *Publicans and Harlots went into the Kingdom of Heaven before them*; and our Lord shews, that *Except our Righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharises, we can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Whether the Righteousness of Hypocritical Pharises, or such that were Morally sincere.

APPLICATIONS

1. We from hence infer, That Men may be Legally or Morally righteous, and yet perish for ever; Moral Righteousness gives no Man a Title unto Eternal Life.

2. We infer, but very few People know the True and Only Way of Salvation; most think it is by leading a Sober Life, or that Holiness is the only Way to Happiness, or because no Man can be saved without Holiness; they think their inherent Holiness, and good Works will save them: But alas! Sirs, while some Men (with the Jews) follow after Righteousness, they may not attain to the Law of Righteousness, and the Reason of it the Apostle gives, *viz. Because they seek (as it were) it by the Works of the Law* (or by their own Righteousness) and others who are great Sinners, such as the Gentiles were, *Which follow not after Righteousness may attain to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith.*

3. Exhort. Be exhorted you that are conceited of your own Righteousness, to make your Boast of that no more; but utterly despair of any Relief or Help that Way for your poor Souls; but look out to Jesus Christ for a better Righteousness, *Even the Righteousness of Christ, which is by Faith of the Son of God.* And this do with all Speed, lest *Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you*; for you hear the Publican (who humbled himself) was exalted or justified; and the Pharisee, who trusted to his own Righteousness was rejected, and cast off by the Lord.

For the Pressing this Great Duty upon you, consider these Things following.

1. Consider, that you are condemned notwithstanding all your Righteousness for Original Sin, and also for all your own Actual Sin, you lying under the Guilt of both, until you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Consider, that all sincere and most pious Christians in the World, who believe in the Lord Jesus and are justified, do see so much Sin cleaving to their own inherent Righteousness (tho' it far exceeds yours) that they look upon it but as Dung, or as filthy Rags.

3. And from hence also know and well consider, that none of the Holy Saints of God, durst ever plead their own Righteousness at God's Bar; mind what *Job* says, *I abhor my self.* And *David*, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no Flesh*

Rom. 9.

32.

Verse 31.

Phil. 3. 9.

Job 42. 5.

Psa. 143. 2

Flesh

Flesh living be justified: Tho' David thus crys out; yet what Man had ever greater Repentance and Sorrow for Sin, or arrived to an higher Pitch of inward Sanctification, or had a clearer Testimony of his Uprightness, it being positively said, he was a Man after God's own Heart, to which I might add what Holy Paul saith, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.*

4. Consider, that all the Godly ever made mention of God's Righteousness, *Psa. 71. 16* *I will go in the Strength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only*; that is, for his Acceptation and Justification before God, I will not so much as once think upon, or speak of my own Strength, on Abilities, or what I have done; but only plead thy Strength, thy Covenant, thy Promises, thy Righteousness, which I have by Faith, and thro' thy Faithfulness.

5. Consider, that *Jehovah* saith, that in his Righteousness alone is the Hope of all his People, *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength, even to him shall Men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed, in the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.* That is, all that truly believe, or such who are true *Israelites*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; they shall not like the Pharisee glory in their own Righteousness, but shall be acquitted and freed from the Guilt of all Sins, by Christ's Righteousness received by Faith alone, it is not by every one's own Obedience, but *By the Obedience of one, that many are made righteous.* *Rom. 5. 19*

6. Consider, O Sinner, tho' thou art as vile as the worst, or a notorious and prophane Person, such as the Publicans were; yet if thou art helped as an undone Sinner to fly to Jesus Christ, there is certainly Mercy and Pardon for thee: True, whilst thou remained unconvinced of thy Sins and sinful State, there is no Hope, no Ground for thee to conclude God will forgive thee; but if thou smitest upon thy Breast, and look'st upon thy self not worthy to lift up thine Eyes to Heaven, and canst plead for Mercy thro' the Satisfaction of Christ, thou needst not doubt of finding Mercy with God. O what a happy Man is a convinced Sinner, a Sin-sick Sinner, a wounded and self-condemned Sinner; *Sirs*, as no Man's own Righteousness can save him, so no Man's Unrighteousness (if penitent and believing) can damn him.

Consolation. What Comfort then is here for broken hearted Sinners, and for all true Believers; your Sins God will forgive, nay, he hath forgiven them;

and will remember them no more: No Enemy, no Devil, nay, no Sin can ever separate you from the Love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord; *If any Man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*: But this I know will not, cannot be an Encouragement to you to sin, no, God forbid, you know with what a dear Price you come by Pardon (Dear I mean to Christ, tho' in a cheap and easie Way to us) the Love of God will constrain you to hate all Sin, and to love Holiness: O be perswaded to lead a Holy Life, that your Faith may be evidenced to your own Consciences to be of the right Kind; and let it be your Care and mine, to shew forth the Glory of God's Rich Grace, who hath pardoned and justified us freely, *Thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and being now made free from Sin, and become the Servants of God, you have your Fruit unto Holiness, and the End Everlasting Life.* Amen. *Rom. 6. 22*

SERMON XXII.

LUKE XVIII. 13, &c.

Two Men went up into the Temple to pray, &c.

And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up his Eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner. &c.

IF the Publican was a *Gentile*, he was not admitted into the Court of *Israel*, but must stand as far off in the Temple, as the Court of the *Gentiles* was from the other; but it is thought this Publican was a *Jew*, and that the Pharisee would not suffer him to stand near to him, nor indeed would they any but those of their own Sect: *Brethren*, From what is said of the Pharisee, I have prosecuted one Point of Doctrine, and from what is spoken of the Publican, I shall take Notice of another, and speak briefly unto it. *viz.*

Doct. 2. That an Enlightned Person whom God justifieth, looks upon himself with Abhorrence, or is humbled at the Foot of God, and sees himself (as in himself) a woful, lost, and an undone Sinner.

First,

The Parts
of the Pa-
rable con-
cerning the
Publican
opened.

First, This appears to be an undeniable Truth, from what is said of this Publican.

The Publican stood afar off, and would not lift up his Eyes unto Heaven, &c. A Sinner enlightened, convinced, or thoroughly humbled at God's Foot, sees so much Guilt and Filth in himself, that he dares not, or is ashamed to look up to God.

But smote upon his Breast.

What may
be meant by
smiting on
his Breast.

1. O Here is the Plague (as if he should say) it is in this vile Heart of mine; O what a Rebellious and Obstinate Sinner have I been against God, how have I contemned his Authority, resisted his Will, violated his Holy Law, slighted his Goodness, abused his Patience, &c. He had a thorough Sense of the Majesty, and Holiness of God upon his Soul; like that of the Pro-

phet, *Woe is me I undone, because I am a Man of Unclean Lips, and dwell in the midst of a People of Unclean Lips; for mine Eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts. — I that am but Dust and Ashes,* said Blessed Abraham; who was a Man brought to the Foot of God, who be-

fore was an Idolater, *Who raised up righteousness the Man from the East, and calling him to his Foot.* So from the Hebrew some read it. — Thus the poor Publican looks upon himself, even a loathsome and vile Creature, a filthy Leper, or as abominable Carrion in the Sight of God, *He stood afar off* (as One notes) that a Mediator might come between God and him, or between him, and Sin avenging Justice.

Smote upon his Breast, &c.

2. This smiting upon his Breast may denote his great Sorrow for his Sins, or as a demonstration of his Unfeigned Repentance (as commonly a Man doth that sees his State deplorable) yet no doubt he was convinced of the pardoning Mercy of God in Christ; for in vain do any plead for Mercy, until they see God is reconciled in his Son, and that in him there is Forgiveness that he may by feared.

3. His smiting upon his Breast may also signify his Indignation against his Sin (for true Repentance, the Apostle shews, worketh this in the Soul of a Sinner) *Yea, what Indignation? Yea, what Fear, &c.* He had an utter Abhorrence of himself for his Iniquity, and a Hatred of his Sins.

4. His smiting upon his Breast, may also signify that Apprehension he had, of the Infinite Love, Grace and Mercy of God to him, upon his Flying to him in and thro' Jesus Christ; as when a Man is apprehensive of some great, wonderful

and undeserved Favour from one that he hath abominably abused, smites upon his Breast, Lord (as if he should say) who could have once thought, that I who have been such a Rebel against thee, should see Hopes of Pardon; and that purpose of thy Love and Grace, of receiving me into thy Favour and gracious Presence, and confer Honour upon me, — but can it indeed be thus, Lord, or am I in a Dream, or only flatter my self: For some doubts, my Brethren, especially at first, may attend true Faith in poor, convinced Sinners.

Saying, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Certainly (as I hinted before) this Publican represents one that was enlightened into the Knowledge of a Mediator, this is implied tho' not expressed; he pleads not for Mercy, but in that way God only lets his Mercy and pardoning Grace forth to Sinners, which is only in Jesus Christ.

But pray observe his Confession, *To me a Sinner.*

1. He confesseth himself a Sinner, nay, one of the worst, the greatest, or chiefest of Sinners, as Paul saith and confesseth, *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief:* He does not say he had been the chief of Sinners, but he had such a Sense of his former Sins upon his Heart (when he was a Blasphemer, a Persecutor and Injurious) that he still loathed himself, counting himself still the greatest of Sinners, *I am, &c.* and Eph. 3. 8. *Less than the least of all Saints.*

2. No doubt but the poor Publican confesseth his Sins, with all the Aggravations of the abominable Circumstances thereof, and also how he stood charged; nay, condemned by the Law of God: The Commandment coming now with Power upon his Conscience, as it came upon Paul, *Sin revived and I dyed;* by which means, Sin became to him *Exceeding Sinful.* Rom. 7. 9, 10, 11.

3. Nay, a True Confession hath more in it, no Question, for he acknowledged the Justice of God, that he might righteously execute the Sentence of the Law upon him, and send him to Hell; Shouldst thou O Lord, enter into Judgment with me, I am gone for ever.

4. It was a deep, a sincere, and hearty Confession, with a Resolution and full purpose of Heart to Sin no more; *God be merciful to me a Sinner,* my Sin is ever before me; what a good and gracious God have I offended? I will not hide my Transgressions, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned;* saith David. I am willing to take Shame to my self,

self, and give Glory to thee; *That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest*: I am contented that thou should launce my Sore, and lay open my Wounds; that so thy pardoning Grace may be more sweet, and consolatory to my bleeding and sin-sick Soul, and that I may have the greater Obligation on me to live to thy Glory, and to advance thine Honour, Lord (as if the poor Publican should say) I am ready to sink down under the Burden of my Sin, O some Relief, one Word of Comfort, Lord, apply the Plaster, the only Remedy, I have nothing to bring, no Motive, no Argument to plead with thee but thy Mercy, Lord be merciful to me; and thus Da-

vid cries out also, *I said Lord be merciful to me, heal my Soul for I have sinned against thee.*

5. In Confession there is also contained Restitution, if the Sinner hath wronged any Man; thus *Zaccheus* who *was a Publican, And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him fourfold*: If a Man be able who hath wronged any Person he must make Restitution, or else his Repentance is not true.

And thus having opened the Parts concerning what the Publican said, and shewed the Nature of his Confession, which partly proves the Truth of the Proposition. I shall,

1. Further endeavour to confirm the Doctrine, viz. *That an Enlightned or Convinced Person whom God justifies, looks upon himself with Abhorrence, or is humbled at the Foot of God, and feels himself (as in himself) a woful, lost, and undone Sinner.* And then,

2. I shall shew what Persons may be said to be undone, or in a woful Condition, or what Sinners see cause to abhor themselves for.

3. Shew from whence it cometh to pass, that a Person enlightned cries out for Mercy.

4. Shew how God deals with such a Person.

The Do-
ctrine fur-
ther confir-
med.

First, Further to confirm this Doctrine, consider, that it is no Wonder that this Publican cries out, *God be merciful to me a Sinner* (I abhor my self) because the most Eminent Saints cried out in the same manner as was shewed before. The Prophet *Isaiah* was a Holy Person (as I hinted) yet having a glorious Sight of God, cries out, *Woe is me, I am undone*: The Sight of a Holy God on his Throne made him

dread and tremble; and thus it was also with Holy *Job*, tho' he was a Perfect and Upright Man, one that feared God and eschewed Evil; yet he cries out, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

Job no doubt had not only heard of God, but he had also seen much of God before this time; but now had a more glorious Vision or Manifestation of God than ever he had until now, and see what Effects it had upon him, *Therefore I abhor my self, &c.* as if he should say (as Mr. Caryl notes).

What Job
might ab-
hor himself
for.

1. I abhor my self, that ever I had one good Thought of my own self.

2. I abhor my self and repent in Dust and Ashes, that I ever complained of God's severe Dealings with me, it is enough that I am out of Hell.

3. I abhor my self, that I was ever so bold, as to desire to plead with God my Innocence.

4. I abhor my self that ever I set such a Value upon, or commended my own Righteousness, my Faith and sincere Obedience to be justified at thy Bar.

O I am, alas, an undone Creature as in my self: Thus *Habakkuk* also, *When he heard, his Belly trembled, his Lips quivered, O Lord, I have heard thy Speech and was afraid.* *David* cries out, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified.* He would have the Lord to hear his Supplication in Righteousness, ver. 1. In whose Righteousness, even in that Righteousness, whereby God is ready, and stands engaged to favour such who by Faith fly to him; but Lord, I cannot stand before thee in my own Righteousness, upon a severe Trial, at the Tribunal of thy Divine Justice; for if thou shouldst rigorously examine all the Passages of my Heart and Life, I dread the Thoughts and Consequences of it, I know I should be cast upon the Terms of Strict Justice, and be undone for ever; unless I am found in the Righteousness of my Redeemer.

My Brethren, Altho' the Prophane hear of God, yet they are not afraid, they tremble not, Hypocrites and Presumptuous Persons are secure, from whence is this? Alas! they know not God, they see not the Purity of his Nature, his Justice and Holiness! But it is far otherwise with such, who are enlightned by the Holy Spirit, they dare not vindicate themselves, justify themselves, nor plead their Faith, their inherent Righteousness, not sincere Obedience.

Why Pro-
phane Per-
sons fear
not the Ho-
ly God.

dience: But see cause notwithstanding all those things that are wrought in them, by the Holy Spirit, or done by them tho' the Fruits and Products of true Faith, to cry out they are undone:

1 Cor. 4. 4. For I know nothing of my self, yet am I Paul means not thereby justified: Not that Paul was without Sin, or knew no Evil in himself; no, no, this is not his Meaning, for then he would have contradicted what he speaks in Rom. 7. but in the Discharge of his Ministry, and in the whole Course of his Life he had nothing to charge himself with in respect to any willful Failing, he had in all things been as blameless (perhaps) as any Saint, or Child of God ever was: Well, but what of all this? Some Sin cleaved to him in his own Sight, and much more in the Sight of God who judgeth him; and therefore saith he, I am not hereby justified; I dare not plead my own Works, or my own Righteousness at God's Bar, for he knew he had sinn'd, and formerly broken the Law more than in one point; and now also, When he did Good, Evil was present with him; nay, saith he, The Evil which I hate that do I; O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? I am undone in my self. Now if such Holy Men were forced to plead the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ, is it any strange thing to see the poor Publican to cry out, Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner? So much as to the Proof of the Doctrine.

Secondly, *I shall shew you who it is, that may be said to be undone, or is miserable?*

But before I proceed, let me note one Thing, viz. What being undone doth imply? viz. That such a Person was once, either Originally or Actually in a good Condition, or Rich and Happy. For a Man that was ever poor and miserable, having nothing, cannot in a proper Sense be said to be undone: He that never had any thing cannot have less; or a Person that is not in Misery, need not plead for Mercy. Now all Mankind originally in the First Adam were rich, and every ways in a most Blessed and Happy State and Condition. But every one of his Offsprings as well as himself, by Virtue of his First Sin were undone, being brought into a State of Misery, and so need God's Mercy.

I. A Man, who is possessed of a vast Estate or great Riches, that hath lost it all, even every Farthing by Thieves or by Fire, or otherwise, we say is un-

done, and thus were all Mankind Originally undone.

II. But may be such a Man (mentioned) that hath lost all, may not be every ways so undone, as to be so miserable neither, as all Men are in the First Adam; for perhaps he may be able to work, and so to help and relieve himself; but if he be a poor, impotent, or indigent Person, being utterly unable to work to get himself one bit of Bread. We say poor Creature he is undone, indeed now thus it is with every Man and Woman in the World, as they stand in the First Adam, or under the Covenant of Works; not a Man living who hath any Strength, Power or Ability to help himself; but by Sin adds every Day to his own Misery, and further undoing, and therefore needs God's Mercy.

III. But although the Man I speak of so undone, as to have lost all he had, and hath no Power, or Ability to help himself; so as to get one bit of Bread or Morsel of Meat, yet notwithstanding he may not be so undone, as all Adam's Offspring in a spiritual Consideration are: For he may have some Friends or Brother, that may relieve him and raise him again to a high, a rich and prosperous Condition in the World. But no one Son, or Child of Adam hath any Friend or Brother in all the Earth, to do any thing for him; because the whole Family or Posterity of fallen Mankind were undone; and brought into the same deplorable State and Condition of Want and Poverty: Let a distressed Soul go to what Door he will, not one House hath one bit of Bread in it; not one Person, neither Friend, Enemy, or Brother, which hath so much as a bit of Bread for himself, much more unable to relieve another. Now thus I say it is with all Mankind, as they are in the first Adam, and as they are in themselves; and therefore may well cry out for Mercy, being distressed and utterly undone, or in Misery.

IV. But such Wretched Creatures I speak of (among Men) may not be so miserable neither, as Adam's Offspring are in a spiritual Sense: For tho' he may have lost all he had, and is unable to work (being blind, lame, &c.) and hath not any Friend or Brother to do any thing for him, yet he may not be in Debt, he may not owe any thing; but poor, lost and undone Sinners, besides all I have said, are in Debt, deeply in Debt to God; not one of them but owes Ten Thousand Talents, and one Talent as our

Anno-

The Aggravations that attend a Man that is miserable.

Psalm 49. 7.

Who are in a miserable Condition.

Annotators note, is One Hundred, Eighty Seven Pounds, Ten Shillings, therefore Ten Thousand Talents is a vast Summ.

V. A Man may be said to be in a miserable Condition, who being once in a King's Favour (and raised to great Honour) but for some hainous Crime, as Treason, Rebellion, &c. is cast out of his Favour; and not only so, but is condemned to Die a most fearful and amazing Death. O say all that (hear of it) how happy was this *Noblemnn* once? How Great, how Rich and Honourable a Person was he? But alas! alas! Now he is undone, and is become a most miserable Person; who can be in a more deplorable Condition than he is in now? Why thus it is in a spiritual Sense with Mankind in the *First Adam*, how dear and near to God were we, while we stood in the State of Innocency, in which we were created? What Creature was more in the Love and Favour of God? Man was then in a State of Honour, but for Horrid Treason and Rebellion against the Glorious Majesty of Heaven, we were cast off and rejected of God, and became the Objects of his Wrath and fearful Curse, being sentenced to Die a lamentable Death, even to be burned alive, or to lie in Eternal Flames for ever and ever. And every Man and Woman naturally is in this fearful State, therefore he might cry out, I am undone, O Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.

VI. But the Man I before-mentioned thus cast out of his Prince's Favour, and condemned to Die a cruel Death, yet he may repent and humble his Soul, and his Sovereign Prince may pardon him, and so reverse the Sentence. But the Law which we have broke admits of no Repentance, He
 Deut. 19. that sinned against Moses Law died with-
 15. out Mercy under two or three Witnesses;
 Heb. 10. The Law is not of Faith, that speaks
 28. nothing of Faith in a Mediator, tho'
 Gal. 3.12. Faith in God is commanded in the
 The Law First Precept; but Faith in Christ is not
 admits of commanded by the Law (as that by
 no Mercy. which the Soul shall live) no, no, but
 every Man is required to keep the
 Gal. 3.10. Law perfectly, nay, To continue in all
 Things that is written in the Book of the
 Law to do them; or else he must perish.
 The Law saith, Do this and live, but
 it doth not say for your Non-doing
 of these things, Repent and ye shall live,
 no, Repentance is not of the Law
 but of the Gospel; God's Law is an
 Impression of his Holy Nature, and he
 is just, nay, Justice it self; and there-
 fore he by the Law will not forgive

any Man: Nay, I may say (with Holy Reverence) God cannot forgive, his Justice puts in a Bar, and stops the Plea of Mercy until Satisfaction is made to his Justice, Truth and Holiness, for the Breach of the Holy Law; so that every Man is utterly undone as he is in himself, and as considered under the Law, and stands in need of God's Mercy.

VII. Tho' it be thus, or this be the Tenor of the Law of perfect Obedience, yet some perhaps may say, Mankind may not be quite undone notwithstanding this fiery and severe Law; may not God reverse that Law, abrogate the Law that requires perfect Obedience, and give forth a more mild Law that will admit of Faith, Repentance and sincere Obedience, that so by such a sweet, and more gentle, and mild Law Sinners may be justified.

Ans. Unto this I answer (as I have *The Moral Law abides for ever, as a Rule of Life and Obedience.* elsewhere) that the Law which requires perfect Obedience, God will never reverse, repeal, or abrogate; no, the pure Moral Law stands as an Eternal Rule of Obedience (tho' as a Covenant of Works it is abrogated) God doth not now require us, to keep the Law that we may be justified (as he did require the first Adam) no, we must believe in Jesus, yet not one Jot of the Law, not one Precept of the Moral Law shall pass, while Heaven and Earth abides.

1. For what is the Sum of the Moral Law, is it not *To love the Lord our God Mat 22.39 with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength, and our Neighbour as our selves*: Now is not this our indispensable Duty still, or is it not as much our Duty thus to do, as it was the Duty of God's People under the Law, nay, are not we commanded to be Perfect, Mat. 6.48. as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

2. The Law is (as it were) an Image of God's Nature, God allows of no Sin, no more doth his Holy Law; All Precepts of the Moral Law are good, and therefore commanded, and not commanded and therefore good (as all meer positive Precepts are) therefore should God offer Violence to his Law, or abrogate that, his very Essence would change, nay, he would cease to be God; for he may as soon cease to be God, as cease to be less Holy; or give a Law to justify a Sinner, that admits of imperfect Obedience, or such Obedience which is attended with any Sin, and horrid Filth and Pollution; therefore the Publican might well cry, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.*

3. Moreover, Had there been a Law given, or could such a Law have been given

Serm. XXII. *The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.* (129)

given, that could have given Life; God no doubt would have given such a Law for Justification. For what Reason can be given by our Adversaries who plead for such a Law (why the Blessed God did not give such a mild Law of Grace at first) wherein Man's imperfect Obedience if sincere, might so have been accepted and he justified (when fallen) in the Sight of God. And certainly,

The Moral Law refused not as an Act of God's simple Sovereignty, but from the Rectitude of his Nature.

had the Law simply proceeded from the Sovereignty of God, such Alterations had been made, that Man's sincere Obedience thereunto would have been accepted to his Justification; and so God might have spared his own Beloved Son, for then there would have been no need for the Son of God to come into the World to take our Nature upon him, and to be made under the Law, being obliged to work out a perfect Righteousness by his compleat Obedience thereunto, and to die for our Breach thereof; and if a sincere, tho' an imperfect Obedience would have done, we may say with the Apostle, *If Righteousness came by the Law, then is Christ dead in vain*: If Righteousness could have been by any Law, and further more the same Apostle saith, *If there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily, Righteousness should have been by the Law*. But nothing is more clear than this, viz. That the Righteousness to a Sinner's Justification cannot be by Man's Obedience to any Law whatsoever in his own Person; therefore he is utterly undone as to any Help or Relief in himself, and must plead for Mercy thro' Christ's Merits.

My Brethren, The Law must be kept perfectly, and Satisfaction must be made to Divine Justice for our Violation of it, by one substituted in our Room, partaking of our Nature, and accepted of God as our Surety; and if God in his infinite Wisdom had not found out such a Representative, substitute, &c. and accepted of such a Surety we had been eternally undone; and if any Man hath his Eyes open to see this Saviour provided, he beholds the Holiness of the Lord God of Hosts, and the Nature of his Holy Law, he must cry, *Lord, be merciful to me, I am undone*.

VIII. Moreover, if the least Sin, whether it be a Sin of Omission, or of Commission, lays Man under God's Wrath, the Curse of the Law and Eternal Condemnation, he is undone as in himself, and must cry for Mercy; but thus it is, and all Persons must therefore cry out as the Prophet, and the Publican did, when God's Spirit openeth their

Eyes, to see what a State and Condition as in themselves, they are in.

IX. Moreover, if God hides his Face from any Believer, so that he cannot see his Interest in Jesus Christ, nor be able to behold his Discharge from Sin and Wrath by our Blessed Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ; he is ready to cry out he is undone, or as an Object of Pity and Mercy. Thus I have done with the first Thing proposed, viz. What it is to be undone, and when a Person may be said to be undone, and to see himself miserable as in himself.

Secondly, I shall further (God assisting) demonstrate, from whence it cometh to pass, that Persons who are enlightened by the Lord come to cry out, *They are undone*.

1. From the Manifestation of the Holiness of God's pure Nature, God is infinitely holy, amazingly holy, he is Holiness it self in the Abstract, essentially holy; Holiness is his very Being and Nature, he infinitely hateth all Sin and Iniquity, or whatsoever is contrary and opposite to his Holiness and the Rectitude of his Nature; God cannot love nor delight in, nor justify any Creature, that is polluted and defiled with Sin as he is in himself, nor have Communion with them, who have the Image (or Likeness) of the Devil, stamp'd upon their polluted and degenerate Hearts; but indeed as they are so considered he abhorreth them.

From whence it cometh to pass, that Sinners are miserable, and see themselves so to be.

2. It riseth from, or is occasioned not only from a Sight of God's Glorious Holiness, but also from the Sight and of his Justice. For God will not pardon or forgive Guilty Sinners, i. e. to the Eclipsing the Glory of his Holiness and Infinite Justice: Pray see what he himself declared to Moses, when Moses desired to see his Glory; *And the Lord* Exod. 34. *passed by before him, and proclaimed the 6, 7.*

Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth. Ver. 6. He is Merciful and Gracious, but his Mercy is only let out in a Mediator, *Forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*; but mind what follows, *and will by no means clear the guilty, &c.* Now

I have repeated this great Doctrinal Truth, in speaking to several Parables, because it is the main Gospel Truth, and that many are ignorant.

all are guilty, and stand charged before him by his Law and Justice, as in themselves; and so remain until they are pronounced just and righteous in Christ. *Sirs,* Legal Repentance and Sorrow for Sin renders no Person a Subject of Gospel Pardon, or such that God will forgive; no, be they penitent or impenitent 'tis all one, unless they fly to him by Faith, in and by Jesus Christ; they stand charged, and *He that believeth not, the Wrath of Joh. 3.36.*

God abideth on him: My Brethren, There is no begging Mercy for the sake of Mercy, without Eyeing a Compleat Satisfaction made to Divine Justice; or without Seeing how, and by Whom this Satisfaction is made: And therefore, until a poor Sinner seeth his Discharge in Jesus Christ, and Divine Wrath pacified in him, if he be thoroughly convinced by the Spirit, he will behold himself miserable, as in himself.

The Sight and True Knowledge of the Law makes a Man cry out for Mercy.

3. An Enlightned Sinner comes to see that he is undone, by his being convinced of the Purity, and Holiness of the Law of God which he hath broken; he understands the Spirituality of the Law, and how every Sinful Thought and Lust of the Heart is a Breach thereof, and lays him obnoxious to God's Wrath and Curse; and by this means he is brought to cry out, He is undone. Thus it was

Rom. 7.9. with Paul, *I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came Sin revived and I dyed.* The Law entered, or came with Power upon his Conscience and Sin abounded, he thought he was alive, and in a good Condition before, but soon saw he was deceived, and thus he was made to cry out, and thus no doubt it was here with the Publican.

4. It riseth from a Clear and Full Sight and Sense of Sin, which is so opposite and contrary unto the pure Nature and Holiness of God.

1. In respect of the Guilt of it.

2. In respect of the abominable Filth and Pollution that is in Sin, and how it bath defiled the Soul.

3. From the Sense of the Great Power and Strength of Sin.

4. From the Sense and Sight of God's Entering into Judgment, and calling of the Soul to his Bar and Fearful Tribunal; or by beholding the severe Punishment and just Demerit of Sin: Had not the Prophet some Apprehension of this, when he saw the Lord upon a Throne high and lifted up?

Poole's Annota. on Isa. 6. 5. *I dread the Thoughts of appearing before thy Judgment-Seat, which I see erected in this Place. — The Sight of this Glorious and Holy God gives me cause to fear, that he is come in Judgment against me.*

The Sense of the Guilt of Sin, renders Men as in themselves miserable.

1. It is from the Sense of the Guilt of Sin, and of that abominable Evil which is in it, it being directly contrary to the Holy Nature of God, Rebellion against him, and a Re-

sisting of his Will. Can the Spirit of a Man bear him up, or support him, when the Weight of Sin lies upon his Conscience and presseth his Soul, or when God comes by his Spirit, and shews him what a Holy and Just God he hath sinned against, wronged and abused, and what a Holy Law he hath violated, both Originally and Actually also; and that many thousand Times: Alas! Should God but charge the Guilt of one Sin, upon the Soul of any Man in the World, and demand Satisfaction to his Justice, what could the Sinner do? What Distress of Conscience would he be in? and how would he cry out for Mercy? Who then can bear the Weight of such a Mountain of horrid Guilt, that lies upon every Sinner out of Christ, or in his Natural State, or that seeth not how he is discharged, justified and acquitted in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Can the feeble Sinner bear the Weight of Sin, when the Guilt thereof is charged upon him, considering how it made the Great and Mighty Saviour to shrink and faint, nay, to cry out, and to sweat great Drops of Blood, when the Guilt of the Sins of the Elect was laid upon him.

1. Can the Law, or his Keeping the Commandments ease him of this Burden; no, no, saith he, the Law accuses me and condemns me, and all that seek to it for Relief and Succour, thinking to be justified thereby; for 'tis the Strength of Sin. *The sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law: The Law entered not to discharge us from Sin, no, but that Sin might abound, and become exceeding sinful.* The Law lays every Sinner that seeks for Relief thereby, under its fearful Curse; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the Book of the Law to do them: The Law slays the Sinner, it kills him, and lays him dead at the Foot of God, that flies thither for Help; and this the Sinner sees when his Eyes are opened by the Spirit, and Convictions are set home upon his Conscience; he thereby sees the Purity and Spirituality of the Law; so that from thence, instead of obtaining Relief and Succour, he is forced to cry out, Woe is me! Lord, Be merciful to me a Sinner.*

2. Can a Man's own Obedience and inherent Righteousness, in Conformity to the Gospel, under the Sense of Sin relieve him? No, no, saith the Enlightned Sinner; Alas! alas!

All.

Bare Obedience to Gospel Precepts can relieve no Man.

Serm. XXII. *The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.* (131)

Isa. 64. 6. *All my own Righteousness is but Filthy Rags, or it's loathsome in God's sight, being attended with abominable Pollution, and this made David cry out, Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified.*

Outward Privileges cannot relieve a Sinner.

3. Will a Godly Man's pleading his External Privileges relieve him: Many boast of the great Privileges they have attained, like the People of Israel of old who cryed out, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are we*: Thus many now glory in that they have been baptized, are Members of a Church of Christ, and have often received the Lord's Supper, are endowed with Great Learning and many Spiritual Gifts; but alas! those things can afford them no Relief under the Guilt of Sin, nor be a sufficient Plea at the Bar of God, should he enter into Judgment with them: See what Paul saith, *If any Man thinketh that he hath any thing, wherof he might trust in the Flesh, I more; circumcised the Eighth Day, of the Stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee: Concerning Zeal, persecuted the Church, touching the Righteousness of the Law blameless.* But notwithstanding all this, see what he further saith; *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* If any Man by his External Duties and Religious Privileges, might hope for Acceptance with God, Paul much more; Who of the Jewish Church excelled him, or had that Cause to glory or receive Relief and Succour under the Guilt of Sin, from hence like unto him.

Object. But perhaps some may object and say, 'That Paul only in this Place and upon this Occasion, refers to his Legal Duties and Legal Privileges; those (say they) its true, could not commend him to God, nor are to be trusted in, or to be pleaded with God. For by the Works of the Law, no Flesh can be justified in God's Sight; but he was now a Converted Man, and had attained to many Great and Glorious Gospel-Privileges, and to a High Degree of Gospel Obedience and Holiness; and those things sure will avail him, and might relieve him under the Sense of Sin and the Guilt thereof; he speaks of the Time past, &c.

Ans. I answer, It is evident he comprehends all his Gospel-Duties and Gospel-Privileges also; and excludes

them likewise, or accounted them, and all his present inherent Righteousness as nothing, in point of Trust or Dependence: Yea, doubtless, and I do account Phil. 3. 8. *all Things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the Loss of all things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Christ*: He speaketh 'now universally, what he did but indefinitely before (as our Annotators note) using the present Tense with a Discretive Particle. He disesteemed and excluded not only his Jewish and Legal Privileges, Duties and Righteousness, which he had before, but also his Christian or Gospel Privileges, &c. after Conversion: Tho' he was an Apostle, and had been an Instrument in Christ's Hand, to convert many Thousands to the Faith, and had planted many Churches; but he sought for no Relief by these Things, as having any Worth in them to commend him to God, or as any Matter to be trusted to, or rested on for Justification before God. He remarkably puts in all he had when a Pharisee, and now he is an Apostle, yea, whatsoever could be thought of besides Jesus Christ; as being in comparison of Christ accounted but *Dung*; therefore in himself (or as so considered) notwithstanding all his Duties and Privileges, he saw he was lost and undone, and must fly to God's Mercy in Christ.

4. But some perhaps may say, Will No Sacrifices but the Sacrifice of Christ can relieve a poor Sinner not Sacrifices (which a poor Sinner may bring and offer up to God) appease and satisfy Divine Justice, and so relieve and give Ease to his distressed Conscience; suppose he could bring *A Thousand Rams, or Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl, or offer his first born, the Fruit of his Body for the Sin of his Soul.* God in the Law required a Ram, or a few Rams to be offered up in Sacrifices; but if they were too few we will offer a Thousand, or a very great Number: The Phrase (as One notes) is an *Hyperbole*. Also Oyl was required in Sacrifices in *Meat-Offerings*, tho' in no great Quantity, a *Log*, or *Hin*, about Half a Pint; or Two or Three Quarts; that was too little, and infinitely short to satisfy Divine Justice; but what if we should offer *Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl*, had we such store; (which no Man ever had or could have) would such an Offering satisfy for our Sins, and procure God's Favour? or if that will not do, suppose we should do as *Abraham* did, offer our First born; which Sacrifice must needs excell any other!

other : But alas ! such a Sacrifice God would reject. But then,

Repentance
cannot ju-
stifie a Sin-
ner, or pro-
cure God's
Favour.

5. Will not Repentance give a Man Ease, or relieve him under the Guilt of Sin, when it lies heavy on his Conscience? No, it cannot; for then David's Heart needed not to have failed him, nor he to have roared out in Distress and Horror, for who had greater Repentance than he, who watered his Couch with his Tears;

Psal. 6. 6. *I make my Bed to swim, I water my Couch with Tears, I am weary of my Groanings* — How! Who would be weary of such Groanings, or the Shedding of such Tears, which could wash away the Guilt of Sin, and appease an Accusing Conscience? — But alas! alas! he found no Relief that way; but still cries, *Lord, Be merciful to me, for I have sinned against thee, — Wash me thoroughly from mine Iniquity and cleanse me from my Sin* : He (with the Publican and all convinced Sinners)

Psa. 51:
2. 3.

Zech.
13. 1.

Saw a fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleanness; in which he must be washed which is the Blood of Christ.

No more
can a Re-
formation
of Life.

6. But will not a new Course of Life, a Changed or Reformed Life give Ease, and procure a Sinner's Acceptance with God under the Sense of Sin and Guilt. — No, this will not do neither, tho' 'tis to be feared many trust to this as their last Refuge: Will Promises a Debtor may make (and keep them) that he will run no more, or any further in his Creditor's Debt, to whom he owes Ten Thousand Talents, pay off that old Score or so vast a Sum? Besides, who can promise God that he will sin no more, there being *No just Man on Earth, that doth good and sinneth not.*

But to proceed,

The Filth of
Sin distress-
es an awa-
ken'd Per-
son.

II. The Cause of a poor, convicted Sinner's crying to God for Mercy, is from the Sense he hath of the Filth of Sin; *I am* (saith the Soul) *a Man of Unclean Lips.*

1. The Convinced Sinner sees the Pollution of his Heart: My Heart (saith he) is defiled; even in all the Faculties of my Soul is much Sin: O how Depraved and Dark is my Understanding, how Carnal is my Mind, how Rebellious my Will, and how Earthly my Affections, how Treacherous is my Memory, and misled and misguided is oft-times my Conscience?

Rom. 7. 14
19, 24:

I am carnal, sold under sin (saith the great Apostle) *the good I would do I do not; but the evil I hate that do I: — O Wretched Man that I am.*

2. Sin cleaves to our Desires, and what Weakness and Inconstancy is

there in our Purposes and Resolutions, and how oft have we broke our Promises with God.

3. Sin more or less defiles our whole Conversations, in our Daily Walk and Converse with Men: My Brethren, Tho' a Believer is sanctified in every Part, in every Faculty, yet it is but in part in any; and tho' his Conversation is Holy, yet is not his Conversation without Sin.

III. Nay, my Brethren, Sin also defiles all our Graces, or cleaves to every Grace of the Spirit in Believers: *Sin cleaves to every Grace.*

1. Some make a great Noise of their Faith, and place it in the room of perfect Obedience to the Law of Works, but alas! Faith it self needs a Saviour (I mean the Sin that cleaves to our Faith) we may all say, *We believe, Lord, help our Unbelief*: Abraham, tho' at one time he was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God; yet, alas! how weak was his Faith at another time, *Say, I pray thee, thou art my Sister; I am afraid they will kill me for thy sake.* Can any say, there is no Sin, no Doubts, no Weakness, no Fear attends their Faith.

2. Sin cleaves to our Love: Do we love God with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength, and our Neighbours as our selves. This is, 'tis true, our Duty, but we can as soon perfectly keep the whole Law as thus to love God; for tho' our Love be sincere (and so 'tis said to be perfect) yet no Man loves God in the highest Degree of Perfection. O how is our Love divided between God and the Creature, yet I deny not, but every true Christian loves God with a Superlative Love: Again, Do we love the Church, and every Believer as we ought? Do we love our Brother as our selves, and miss not at any time, fail not in Heart, Word, nor Deed.

3. Sin cleaves to the Grace of Humility: What think you, is there no Pride, no High Thought, nor Conceitedness in our Hearts, of our Wisdom, Gifts, Parts or Learning; do we always esteem others better than our selves.

4. And then as to Temperance and Sobriety: Do we never exceed in the inordinate Love of the Creature, or in the Use of Lawful Things? Do we never exceed the Bounds of Temperance in Eating, Drinking, nor Sleeping; nor in Buying, Selling and Possessing? Do such who have Wives live as if they had none? Do you ne-
ver exceed in Weeping or Worldly Sor-

1 Cor. 7.
29, 30, 31.

Serm. XXII. *The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.* (133)

Sorrow, nor in Earthly Comforts? Do they that buy, buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this World as not abusing it.

4. And then as to the Grace of Patience: Doth no Sin defile, or cleave to that Grace? Are any so patient, that they are never disordered; having no inordinate Passion, no Impatience under Afflictions, Trials, Losses, and Cruel Reproaches, and great Provocations? Are there any who are quite free from Wrath, and all Degrees of Murmuring, or undue Complaining under God's Hand, or never are disturbed in their Spirits, nor moved to Anger.

leaves III. Sin also cleaves to all our Duties.

1. Take Repentance as it is a Grace, or as a Duty, hath it not many Defects cleaving to it? Who can mourn for Sin, as much as he ought? Hath not our Sin murdered our Saviour? Is there not an Infinite Evil in Sin, considered objectively? Can then a Finite Creature mourn sufficiently in the Sight and Sense of Sin? Have we not fought against God, and contemned his Authority, resisted his Will, grieved his Spirit, abused his Patience? What kind of Sorrow doth such Sins call for?

2. What Sin attends us in Preaching, and Hearing the Word: Are we never secretly lifted up, when Men foolishly praise us, or do we Preach with that Zeal, Power and Constancy as we ought? and do we always hear the Word, as it is the Word of God? and also with that Holy Awe, Diligence and Reverence that becomes us; and are our Hearts never wandering abroad in the Time of Hearing, nor are ever Drowsie nor Weary under it; and do we always believe and obey the Word Preached, and take the Reproofs of the Word kindly, and never offended with the poor Preacher, while he discharges his Duty with Wisdom and Faithfulness.

3. I might also proceed in the like manner, in speaking to the Duty of Reading God's Word.

4. As to the Duty of Prayer: Do we pray always in Faith, *Lifting up Holy Hands without Wrath or Doubting.* Do we never restrain Prayer from

God, nor are we at no Time remiss in it?

5. I might also speak of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and of Church-Communion. And,

6. Of the Duty of Distributing to the Poor.

7. Of all Relative Duties: As those of Husbands to Wives, and Wives to Husband; Parents to Children, and Children to Parents; Masters to Servants, and Servants to Masters: And also of the Duties of one Neighbour to another. Are there any, who never fail in any of these Duties, or hath not every one need to cry out, *Lord, Be merciful to me a Sinner!*

Thirdly, Every one hath cause to cry out, and to plead the Mercy of God in Christ, in respect of the Power of Sin: What Bones hath Sin broken, what strong Men, strong in Grace, have been worsted and overcome by Sin? *David* cries out, *All my Bones are broken*: Nay, my Brethren, how did it crush the Son of God himself, and cause him to sweat great Drops of Blood, when it lay heavy upon him, he standing in our Law Place.

Fourthly, They cry out and beg Mercy in respect of the Demerit of Sin, or from that Sense they have of the Severe Judgment of God, or the severe Punishment that is due to it: Alas! it deserves infinite Wrath, even the least Sin that a Child of God commits, for the Satisfaction of Christ doth not lessen the Demerit of Sin, tho' our Lord hath born it for us, yet Sin is not less evil, nor less deserving, as in it self.

Fourthly and Lastly, I shall shew you, what Care God takes of such that are humbled at his Foot, or cry out for Mercy thro' Christ's Merits, as being in themselves undone, or shew the Happy State such are in.

I. As God hath found out a Ransom, a Saviour, or hath laid Help upon one that is mighty; so this Ransom is applied to these Souls; they find Help in this Almighty One.

II. And as the Father laid all the Sins of the Elect upon his own Son, and he hath paid all their Debts, so those Souls who are thoroughly humbled, and are brought to believe in Jesus, are justified and pardoned. *He went away rather justified:* The Pharisee was not justified, but this Publican was; he that humbles himself shall be exalted, saith our Lord; which Words he uttered, to shew that the Publican was humbled, and therefore was exalted: Justification, *my Brethren*, tends to lift up or exalt a poor Sinner, for such are brought into a State of Peace, and of Union and Communion with God, their Persons are in the special Love and Favour of God, nay, they are the Sons and Daughters of God, this our Lord discovered to *Zacchaeus*, such who are the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, and in the Covenant of Grace with God, as *Abraham* was, and so the Children of God.

Mat. 9. 12,
13.

III. They are the very proper Objects of Mercy, or such to whom God sent his Son, to call, to heal, to seek, and to apply the precious Vertue of the Blood of the Covenant unto. *The whole need not a Physician, but them that are sick. But go and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice; for I am not come to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance.*

Rev. 2. 7.

IV. By vertue of their Receiving the Spirit, by which they are united to Jesus Christ; they have his Righteousness imputed to them, and have Interest in all the Riches of Christ, and therefore tho' poor in themselves, yet are very rich. *I know thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty, but thou art rich.* None that are poor in Spirit, poor in themselves, but are rich in Christ. Such that think they are increased in Goods, and have need of nothing, are poor and miserable; and such who see they have nothing, possess all things because they have Christ.

Isa. 66. 2.

V. God looks upon these Persons with a Look of Approbation, Affection and Benediction: *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and that trembleth at my Word.* Such that look upon themselves with

Abhorrence, God looks upon with Acceptance.

VI. God doth not only look unto them, but also he dwells with them, yea, dwells in them: *For thus saith the High and Lofty One, Isa. 57. 15 who inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the High and Holy Place, and with him also that is of a Contrite and Humble Spirit: Well, but why will God dwell in such Spirits, and what Advantage will this be? See the next Words, To revive the Spirits of the humble, and to revive the Hearts of the contrite Ones; their Spirits would otherwise fail, and their Souls would faint: What can administer greater Comfort, and what can be higher Honour, than to have God by his Spirit in us, and dwell with us? For you are the Temple of the Living God, 2 Cor. 6. 16; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. They have Life in them, the Holy Spirit is that Life, Which is as a John 4. 14. Well of Water springing up unto Everlasting Life.*

VII. See what Care God takes of such, no sooner did the Prophet see his own Filthiness, or that he was a Man of Unclean Lips, but he Crys out *he was undone*; and immediately God sent one of his Angels to him to comfort him. *Then flew one of the Seraphims unto him, having a live Coal in his Hand, which he had taken with the Tongs from the Altar and laid it on my Mouth.* This shews the Work and Office of the Holy Spirit, who applies the Blood of Christ, the Righteousness and Merits of Christ, and Comfort to a poor undone Sinner, denoting the Great Speed and Hast God takes, to comfort poor, dejected, humbled and broken-hearted Sinners; as if God should say to one of the *Seraphims*, Be gone, behold my *Servant Isaiab* is almost pressed down into Dispair under the Sense of his Sin, and *Uncleanness of his Lips*, assure him, that all his Sins are passed away and pardoned for ever: The Holy Spirit must first come, and touch our Hearts and Lips, before we have Ease and Cure. *And he laid it upon my Mouth and said, this hath touched thy Lips, and thine Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin is purged.*

VIII. Our

Serm. XXII. *The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.* (134)

Mat. 5. 3.

VIII. Our Lord pronounceth in the first place (in the Beatitudes) Blessedness to them who are humbled Souls, who see their own Nothingness, and cry to God for Mercy. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* They are the only Heirs of Eternal Glory above, and have not only a true Title to it, a Right to the Heavenly Inheritance, but a proper Meetness for it also: And therefore such that are poor in Spirit, who see their own Poverty, and cry unto God for Mercy as this Publican did; are exalted and in a Blessed State and Condition.

APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. I infer, that Sin is of an Undoing Nature, it hath wrought all Men into a Woful State and Condition; *Adam* was once Rich (and we in him) but by Sin he and all his Off-springs were undone, and so remain in a miserable State, until they are transplanted out of that Dead Root, and united to the *Second Adam*, or implanted into Jesus Christ.

Infer. 2. We may also Infer, that the Pharisees and Self-righteous Ones are woful Blind, for, if Believers see themselves (as in themselves) to be so poor and miserable, and cry unto God to have Mercy upon them: What Blindness is in such Persons, who think themselves rich, and have need of nothing.

II. *Admirat.* Admire God's Love in Jesus Christ, who hath out of his Infinite Wisdom, Grace and Goodness; found out a Way to enrich undone Sinners, and to raise our Admiration.

1. Consider, that the Remedy was provided before we were wounded, a Garment prepared to cloath us, before we were naked and needed it.

Rom. 5. 20.

2. Consider also, that God hath raised us to greater Honour, and bestowed better Riches in the *Second Adam*, then those we lost in the first; *Where Sin abounded, Grace hath much more abounded.*

3. Consider, God hath not only brought us into Christ, into a bet-

ter State, or bestowed greater Riches and Honour upon us; but it is also firm, more sure and abiding, we can be undone no more, all our Wealth and Riches is put into a safe Hand to secure it for us: It is all laid up in our Head, in our Lord Jesus Christ; our Life, and Riches, *Our Life is hid with Christ in God.* 'Tis hid with Christ, by Vertue of our Union with him, as Christ is one with the Father, so are Believers one with Christ; *Because I live ye shall live also.*

Joh. 14. 19.

Trial III. Examine your selves. Did you ever see your selves in a miserable State, ever made sensible of your spiritual Poverty, and that you stood in need of God's Mercy: Did you see Justice and Divine Wrath pursuing you like as the Avenger of Blood pursued the Man-slayer) and are you still at the Foot of God, and poor in Spirit, bewailing the Filth and Corruptions of your own Hearts, and Evil of your Lives, or are you not proud and conceited, and glory in what you have received, or think you are full. O let us all see, how it is with us in this Case.

Quest. But why doth the Lord bring poor Sinners into such a Condition, as to see themselves to be in a miserable State, as in themselves, and to cry out to God for Mercy, when he is about to advance them to a State of Happiness?

Ans. 1. It is to imbitter Sin unto our Souls, that we may know how hateful it is unto God, and that we may the more sympathize with our Blessed Lord in his Sorrows (when our Sins lay heavy upon him) tho' we satisfy not Divine Justice, yet it is reasonable, we should mourn and be grieved that we have offended, and be in Bitterness for him whom we have pierced.

Why God brings poor Sinners to see the great need they have of his Mercy.

Zech. 10. 12.

2. It is to shew the Insufficiency that is in us, to help or relieve our selves, and that we might be abased to the Dust, and for ever be delivered from Pride and Vain-glory, and have no Confidence in the Flesh: *Phil. 3. 3.* Man being born under a Covenant of Works, is naturally a proud Creature, but God by letting in true Light into our Understandings, discovers our Odious and Filthy Hearts to us, and so pulls down our

our Pride, and abaseth us as to the Dust.

3. It is to discover the absolute Necessity of Jesus Christ to us, and the great Need we have of such a Saviour, of such a Physician, and of such a Righteousness, which Christ hath wrought out for us, to render us lovely in the Sight of God.

4. That we might be brought to ascribe all the Glory of Justification, Sanctification and Salvation unto God; or that 'tis wholly of God's Mercy and Free-grace, thro' the Lord Jesus Christ, and so magnifie Rich Bounty, Mercy and Goodness as long as we live in this World; It being the grand Design of God in the Work of our Redemption, to advance his Honour, and the Honour and High Praise of his Blessed Son our Redeemer for ever: Who can admire Sovereign and Undeserved Mercy more than they, that have been in the Depths of Sorrow and Misery, and are for ever delivered and raised to Glory and Eternal Happiness?

5. Moreover, That we may never trust in our selves, *We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we might not trust in our selves, but in God that raiseth the Dead:* Tho, we are weak in our selves, yet are strong in the Lord; and tho' Sinners in our selves, yet righteous in the Lord; and tho' dead, yet God can raise the Dead; and tho' we have no Sufficiency in our selves, yet that the Grace of God is sufficient for us.

Inform. *Ver* This may inform us, what the Reason is, that Sinners cry out no more as being distressed: Alas! they see not, know not their Misery, or that Woful State they are in; nor indeed will they until their Eyes are opened, they neither know God, the Law, Sin, nor themselves.

V. And from hence also we may be informed, what kind of Persons they are in their own Sight that God justifies, or when he pronounceth them righteous and pardoned Persons; viz. They are sensible Sinners, humble and nothing in their own Eyes, and that such who justify themselves God justifies not, but contrariwise leaves them under his Wrath and Condemnation; and therefore all self-righteous Persons may see cause from hence to be afraid and tremble.

VI. and Lastly, Let this be Matter of Encouragement to great, nay, the vilest of Sinners, to fly to God in Jesus Christ: O what great Sinners have obtained Mercy! Many of those very Sinners, that put to Death the Lord of Life and Glory found Mercy; nay, our Saviour willed his Disciples, to offer Mercy first to them, when he gave them Commission to go and Preach the Gospel to all the World, and *Begin at Jerusalem:* Let those very Persons that cryed out, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him* (as if our Lord should say) see what Mercy and Bowels, what Pardon and Mercy is in my Heart! *And thus I close with this Parable.*

The Parable of a Servant plowing and feeding Cattel.

SERMON.

LUKE. XVII. 7, 8, 9, 10.

*But which of you having a servant plowing and feeding Cattel, will say unto him by and by when he is come from the Field, Go and sit down to meat. Ver. 7.
And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thy self and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink. Ver. 8.
Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. Ver. 9.
So likewise ye when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do. Ver. 10.*

The Scope
of this Pa-
rable.

THE Scope of this Parable seems to be two-fold.

1. To discover what Kind of Servants we ought to be, namely, such who are wholly devoted to our Lords service, and to attend upon him at all times, tho they did neglect some things that good servants in the proper season ought to do or might do.

2. To discover that no thanks, no honour is due to us from Christ our Lord and Master, for what Service we are capable to do, no, tho we do all things he commandeth us, yet we merit nothing, or deserve not so much as thanks from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which of you having a Servant plowing, &c.

As the Learned note, our Lord refers to Servants, who in those Countreys and in those days were bought with their Money, or taken in War, and so were wholly their Masters, and at their command, and all their Time, and all they could do, was to be laid out in obedience to them, and to attend upon and honour their Master.

Such Servants are, or ought we to be to the Lord Jesus Christ, we being bought with a price, yea with the price of his own Blood.

Will say to him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat.

And will not rather say, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thy self, &c.

Supper time being come, tho our Servant has laboured hard, yet we do not say to him, Go eat your Supper first; or

at least wise they did not say so to their Servants; no, but provide my Supper first, before you serve your selves: Such servants we should be to the Lord Christ, not attend upon him when we have served our selves; no, but tho we have done that business he commandeth us, yet still we must attend upon him, and forbear eating and drinking, or minding any secular business; if our Master hath any further service for us to do, we must observe his motion, and honour him, and prefer his glory above our good, tho we go with hungry bellies.

We must observe the proper season to feed and provide for our selves, and not neglect our attendance on Jesus Christ.

Secondly, And when we do thus, even every thing our Lord requires of us, we are not to think we deserve any thing of Christ Jesus, but say, we are thine Lord, our Lives are thine, our Time is thine, our Talents are thine, our Service is thine, and we, when we have done all see cause to be ashamed we have done it no better; we deserve to be blamed rather than commended, much less not think that we deserve wages, or thanks from Jesus Christ for what we have done.

USE.

1. From hence we may note, that as we are bought by Jesus Christ, we must not seek to please our selves, in any thing, in the neglect of our attendance upon him.

2. That we are wholly our Lords, and not our own, being obliged to love him with all our Hearts, Souls and Strength,

K k

and

and that our labour for our Lord must not cease, untill the Lord cease commanding us, or we have no more to do for his glory in this World, which cannot be said until we die.

3. That we should not murmur if our Lord should command us to do such things that may seem hard to the flesh; no, but attend upon his Word and Ordinances, when some may say perhaps you may first mind your selves and Families, and provide what you and they need.

4. That when we have done all Christ hath commanded us, to acknowledge all is of free Grace, and that we deserve not any thing at his hands.

5. That the Lord may delay allowing us that which we may think is necessary in our time, and yet command us to shew our sincere love to him, and honour him with a ready mind, and willing Heart.

6. That we should not so much mind what we shall have or receive at the hands of Christ in doing his work, as we should to glorifie him and promote his honour, owning Christ to be our Master, and we his Servants.

1. This may reprove such who call themselves Christs servants, but choose rather to serve themselves first, and their Lord afterwards; when they have done their own business, and have little else to do, they will obey Christs Commands, and attend upon him, and hear his Word.

2. Also it reproves such that murmur at the Service of Christ, thinking it too hard.

3. And such that are proud and conceited, or that look for praise from Men for what they do, or expect something at Christs hands for what they have done.

4. Such that mix their own Faith and Obedience with Christs Merits, these can't think they are unprofitable Servants, if by their inherent righteousness they are justified in Gods sight.

Lastly, By this we may know who is a true and faithful Servant of Jesus Christ; it is the Honour of Christ such seek in all he doth, and accounts himself unworthy of the least favour and Mercy of God, and also will do whatsoever the Lord Jesus Christ hath commanded should be done.

The Parable of Christ the Door into the Sheepfold.

S E R M O N.

JOHN X. 1, 2, &c.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the Sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a Thief and a Robber. Ver. 1.

But he that entreth in by the Door, is the Shepherd of the sheep. Ver. 2, &c.

*The Scope
and Design
of this Pa-
rable.*

THE holy and beloved Disciple, the Evangelist *John* only, hath recorded this Parable, and (as I think) but one more.

The scope and main design of this famous Parable (as our Annotators call it) is, as I conceive,

1. To prove our blessed Lord himself was the true Shepherd, the true *Messiah* and only Saviour.

2. That all that came before him pretending that they were the *Messiahs*, or Teachers sent of God, and yet had not their Mission from the Father, were false Teachers or Thieves and Robbers.

3. To shew that the Scribes and Pharisees and the Teachers of those Times, were none of the Shepherds of the Sheep of Christ, but Thieves and Robbers also.

4. To shew the nature of the infinite

Love of the True Shepherd to his Sheep.

5. To prove that no man can be a true Leader or Shepherd who is not sent of God.

6. To discover who the Sheep of Christ *Verf. 10.* are, and their great Safety and Happiness. *27, 28.* Some conceive that this Parable reacheth to *Verf. 31.*

But to proceed to the parts hereof: Our Lord confirmeth the truth of that he is about to say, as he commonly used to do. *The parts opened.*

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entreth not by the door into the Sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, &c.

The Sheepfolds I find in those Eastern Countreys were Houses (and not like unto those among us) which had Doors, by which both the Shepherd and the Sheep entred in. By the Sheepfold is meant the

the Church of God, which under the Law was the National Church of the *Jews*, or the *Commonwealth of Israel*; and the door into that Church was by Gods Institution by the first Birth, i. e. all the seed of *Abraham* proceeding from *Isaac* were born members of that Church, by vertue of that Covenant God made with *Abraham* and his carnal seed as such, tho none of his male Children could partake of all the Priviledges and Blessings of that legal Church, without they were first circumcised, which Rite did not only simply belong to the Children of godly Parents that proceeded from *Isaac*, but to the Children of ungodly or unbelieving Parents also, which some good men among us seem not willing either to see or confess; they pretending to prove the right of Infants (born of Believers) from thence to Baptism and Church-membership under the Gospel, which is far enough off to prove any such thing; for the Church of God under the Gospel dispensation is not National but Congregational, it consisteth not of the natural seed of Believers as such, but only of those who are the true spiritual seed of *Abraham*, who were comprehended in the Covenant of Grace, or free Promise of God made to *Abraham*, namely Believers, or such who obtain the Faith of *Abraham*, and walk in the steps of *Abraham*.

The Church under the Law was National, but under the Gospel it is Congregational.

Gal. 3. 29. *And if any man be in Christ he is one of Abrahams seed, and an heir according to the Promise*; it is the second Birth that gives right to Gospel Church Priviledge; yet pray note, it was not the Covenant as such that gave right to the male Children of the *Jews* to Circumcision, but Gods meer positive Precept given to *Abraham*; and so it is Christs own meer positive Precept or Institution that gives right to Baptism under the Gospel, and not a persons being in the Covenant of Grace: For both those Ordinances were of meer positive right, depending wholly on the pleasure and will of the great Law-giver; so that if there is no Precept nor President for Infants Baptism and Church-membership in the New-Testament, that Tradition is gone for ever, and all the pretended proofs taken from Circumcision and the Covenant made with *Abrahams* natural seed as such, signifieth just nothing, unless it be to please mens Fancies, and blind the Eyes of the ignorant.

Circumcision under the Law and Baptism under the Gospel, of meer positive right.

From hence note, that Christ in his Institution is the Door into the visible Church under the Gospel; the Door is of Gods appointment, or of his Ordination, and not that of mans making.

Secondly, Christ is not only thus the Door into the Church, but he is also the Door into Heaven, even as he is the only

Joh. 14. 6. *Way to Salvation, so he is also the Door.*
Act. 4. 12.

Neither is there Salvation in any other, &c.

1. *My Brethren*, Whatsoever Christ is made to us, as he is the Way into the Church, and the Way unto the Father, that he is made as he is called the Door.

2ly, And whatsoever may be said of the usefulness, end and excellency of a Door into a Sheepfold, or into a House, in respect of Appointment and Necessity, (according to the Scope of this Parable) that is the Lord Jesus made as Mediator by the Father, as a spiritual Door both into the Church below, and into Heaven above.

First, A Door referrs sometimes to a house, & sometimes to a sheepfold; so Christ the Door sometimes referrs to the Church, and sometimes to Salvation it self, and also sometimes to the success the Gospel meeteth with, which Door Christ is also, for all success of the Gospel is by 2 Cor. 2. Christ: *A door was opened unto me of the Lord*; — *for a great door and effectual is opened to me, &c.* — *I have set before thee an open door, &c.*

1 Cor. 16. 9
Rev. 3. 8.

Secondly, A Door is appointed by the Owner of a House, or the Builder thereof, and so of a Sheepfold, also the Form and Manner of it: So the great God whose the Flock is, hath constituted, ordained or appointed his Son considered as Mediator, to be the Door in his Institutions into the Gospel Church, and the Way to Heaven and the Door into it.

Thirdly, A Door is fitted (by the wisdom of the Shepherd who owns the Sheep) every way to answer the great End and Design thereof: So Christ is every ways fitted, according to the wisdom of God, who contrived the whole platform of our Salvation and of the Gospel Church, to answer his great end and design. Moreover, there is the like necessity of Christ to let us into Communion with himself here, and into Heaven hereafter, as there is of a Door into a Sheepfold, or into a House, or Palace, &c. 'tis by him we enter into both.

Christ is fitted by the Father as a door into Heaven.

Fourthly, And such that know not, or cannot find the Door into a House, or Sheepfold, such cannot enter into it; so they that know not Christ, or cannot find him who is the only Door, know not the way into the Church nor into Heaven: No, all must find the power of the Spirit of Christ upon their Hearts (as well as what Christ is made of God to all that are saved) and be truly regenerated, if they are by the Lord let into the Church below, and Heaven above. Therefore, if men let any into the Church and not by the Door, but some other way, will they not be accounted worthy of great blame. Look to it you that receive into the Church the carnal seed of Believers as such, who know nothing of Regeneration, or you receive adult Unbelievers and unholy persons: Will you open a

They that can't find the door into the Church, or into heaven, can't enter rightly into one, nor shall ever enter into the other.

Door

door, that Christ who hath the Keys of David, hath shut.

Fiftly, A door into a Palace gives such who enter in a full View of all the Glory and Excellencies thereof, or if it be into a sheepfold of all the Benefits safety and Priviledges of that Sheepfold. So Jesus Christ gives to Believers who enter into the Gospel Church by him, a clear View of all the Blessings, security, and Priviledges of the Church or House of God, they partake of the Riches of Grace, and take a View of the Beauty and Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; they by him enter first into a state of Union with him, and into a state of Life, Justification, Pardon, Peace, Communion, Sanctification, Adoption, and of free Access unto the Father, and are fed there, lie down there, and have Rest and safety there, in the Church is a place of security, it hath strong Walls about it: *Walk about Zion, go round about her, tell the Towers thereof, mark well her Bullwarks, &c.*

Ps. 48. 12, 13.

He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a Thief and a Robber.

My Brethren, as Christ is the door, so he is said to come in at the door, that is, by Gods Appointment, or by the Ordination of the Father, from whom he had his Mission to be both the door and the shepherd also. Now for any to come and pretend themselves to be shepherds of the sheep, and Teachers of the People, and have the Conduct and Government of a Church, who come not in by the door, that is, by the Authority, Commission and Appointment of God, or having no regular Call from God, according to his Ordination in the Gospel, they are Thieves and Robbers, and their design is to make a prey of the sheep, or to shear them, to have the Fleece, but care not to feed the Flock; nor will an humane Constitution or Appointment of man give them any Right to that Work and Office. Every true shepherd hath a true and right Call from God; he that preaches the Gospel, must be sent, and not thrust himself into the Fold, or into the Ministry, without a due and regular Call, for such come not in at the door, but climb up some other way, and so are Thieves and Robbers, whose Pride or Ambition, or secular Advantage prompt them to do what they do, and are not owned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep.

Our Lord in these Words shews his great Mission, which he received of the Father to be the only Mediator, Saviour, and great Shepherd of the sheep, having before shewed that all whom God sent not, were Thieves and Robbers; and indeed

the first Argument the Apostle uses to prove Christ to be an high Priest, is his regular Call: *No man taketh this Honour unto him, but he that is call'd of God, as was Aaron. So Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest, but was made by him,--ut he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. Aaron had a divine Call to his Office; and so had Christ, as he saith in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedeck.*

Heb. 5. 4
Ver. 5.
Pla. 10.

The first thing that every Minister is to do, is to shew by whose Authority he is made a Minister, or produce his Mission to preach the Gospel, being sent according to the Appointment of God in the New Testament, he must prove he came in at the door, that is, by Gods Ordination and Constitution, and that his Call is *Jure Divino*; for if he hath no divine Right or Call of God, he comes not in at the door.

Now this Call or being sent, is either Extraordinary, or Ordinary, the Father gave his Son as Mediator an extraordinary Call, and sent him into the World, and he confirmed his Mission by extraordinary Miracles, and Christ gave his Apostle also an extraordinary Call and Mission; but none have an extraordinary Call now, no, only an ordinary Call, viz. Christ having given them Ministerial Gifts and Grace, and they being Members of a true visible Church, and approved of by the Church, are sent or authorized (according to the Rules Christ hath left in his Word, and Authority given to each particular, regular Congregation) and what regular Gospel Call any can pretend to besides this, I know not.

See Dr. Tho. Goodwin, and Dr. Owen.

To him the porter openeth, and the Sheep hear his Voice, ver. 3, &c.

By the porter I understand is meant the holy Ghost; for it is he that opened the Hearts of men to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. The work of a Porter is to open the door, and give Entrance to persons who may be admitted into the House: Now every mans Heart is shut against Christ, till the blessed Spirit opens the door.

And the Sheep hear his Voice.

The Sheep, *Historians* tell us, in those Countreys well knew the Voice of their Shepherd: so Christs Sheep know his Voice, (i. e.) the true Doctrine of Christianity; they do not only hear the Voice of Ministers, but the Voice of the Son of God, whose Voice raised them from the dead. This refers to the internal Operations of Christs Spirit on the Souls of his People.

And

And he calleth his own Sheep by name.

The Shepherds also in those Eastern Countreys gave Names to every one of their Sheep; and our Lord, it is thought, alludes to that: The Lord Jesus knows all his Saints, as he said to *Moses*; *I have known thee by Name*; so he knows every Saint by Name, also where they live, and what estate and condition they are in.

And leadeth them out.

The Shepherds lead out their Sheep into green Pastures, and by the still Waters, and into shadowy Places in the heat of the day: So Christ leads his Sheep out.

1. Out of themselves, wholly to rest upon him for Righteousness and Justification, also for Food, Refreshment, Succour, Protection, shade and safety, in the day of Persecution.

2. He leads them out of the World, and from Idolatry, and false Ways of Worship.

3. And out also into a visible Profession of his Truth, and into universal Obedience to all his holy Ordinances.

And when he putteth forth his own Sheep, he goeth before them, and the Sheep follow him, for they know his Voice, ver. 4.

Our Shepherds follow their Sheep, but those Shepherds always went before the Sheep: So the Lord Jesus the good Shepherd went before his Sheep, he went before them in his Obedience and suffering, and hath left us an Example, that we and all his Sheep should follow his steps; and hence they are said to follow the Lamb whither soever he goes. Also his Sheep will not follow a Stranger, they know false Teachers, such who hold not the Head, who neither preach the true Saviour, or not the true Christ, nor the true Doctrine of Christ, and others not his true Worship, and Ordinances, tho' through Temptation and Satans Delusions, Christs Sheep may for a while be misled or carried away into Errors, yet they are again recovered; for the Elect cannot finally be deceived, so as to perish by damnable Heresies.

This Parable spake Jesus, but they understood not what things they were he spake unto them, ver. 6.

From hence it appears, that a Parable is not easie to be understood, they did not know what our Lord meant by these Metaphorical Allusions; and therefore he condescended so far to them, as further to explain what he meant hereby.

Then said Jesus again unto them, I am the door of the Sheep, v. 7.

Before he said, he was the door by which the Shepherd, here he saith he is the door of the Sheep; he himself

entered in a regular way by his Fathers Commission into his Work and Office, and he is the door by his Commission given to his Disciples, and of all his Sheep, entrance or admission into the visible Church; but chiefly it may refer to him as he is the door into a state of Peace, Reconciliation, and Union with God, and so into Heaven it self.

All that came before me, were thieves and robbers, but the Sheep did not hear them, ver. 8.

Not that the holy Prophets, who went before him, were Thieves and Robbers, God forbid, he speaks not of them, but all that went before him, who pretended they were the Messiah; or such who were false Prophets, and Deceivers, that bore no Testimony to our blessed Saviour, but taught another way to be saved, than by the Son of God, (who was to come and suffer for our sins in the flesh, even in that flesh which he was to assume in the womb of the Virgin, or the same flesh and blood Heb. 2, 14, that the children partake of.) And as all such who went before him, who were false Christs, or false Teachers, were Thieves and Robbers, so are all those false Christs and false Prophets and Teachers, that come after him; but his Elect (as they did not follow the false Prophets of old) so they do not, will not follow such cursed Deceivers, who he fore-told would after him arise, and beguile many.

I am the door, ver. 9.

See how our Lord repeats the same great Truth of his being the door, as if he should say, There is no Salvation but by me, no obtaining Eternal Life, except ye believe in me, no coming to the Father but by me: *He that findeth me, findeth Life*, and he that knoweth and followeth my Doctrine, shall find the way into the Sheepfold, and be led into green and fat Pastures.

If a man enter in, he shall be saved, &c.

He that believeth on me, shall be saved; he that obtains true Faith in Christ, finds the door to Peace and safety.

He shall go in and out, and find pasture.

He shall find whatsoever his Soul needeth, or whatsoever is truly good, (i. e.) he shall have Grace and Peace here, and eternal Life hereafter.

Go in and out; that is, he shall go into the Pastures, where I feed my Sheep, viz. into, the Assemblies of my People, and out, and be blessed in coming in, and in going out, in lying down, and in rising up.

The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and destroy, v. 10.

Tho by the Thief here may be meant any Deceiver, yet perhaps our Lord chiefly may by this *Thief* refer to *Satan*: Indeed when Deceivers come, Satan the grand Thief comes, whose purpose is to steal, kill and utterly to destroy. Many Deceivers are deceived, and they may not come with an Intention to kill and destroy, but that is Satans design. Yet the poysonous Doctrine of grand Impostors kills and destroys all that suck it in. I come regularly in at the door, Deceivers climb up some other way; and that shews, they come not to feed the Sheep, but to make a prey of them.

I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it much more abundantly.

That they might have Life, that is, my Sheep, mine Elect, or them that my Father hath given to me, that was the Reason I came into the World; it was with an Intention and absolute Purpose to save them for ever. They were dead in sins and Trespasses, and condemned, or under the sentence of death and wrath, and I am come to bear that sentence, and suffer that Wrath that was due to them, or to die in their stead, *the Just for the Unjust*; unless I came and lay down my Life for them, they could not live, I am come to discharge them from Condemnation, to acquit them that they by me might have the Life of Union, and have a principle of spiritual Life infused into them, and have the Life of Justification and of Sanctification, and the Life of Comfort and Consolation, and of Glorification also.

And that they might have it much more abundantly; or a Life far exceeding that Life they had once in the first Adam, a Righteousness far exceeding mans original Righteousness; also a more sure and certain Life, a Life that far excels in its Nature and Quality; for they being united to me their immutable Head, cannot die, *because I live, ye shall live also*. So in Quantity it is much more abundant, more abundant Peace, Joy and Comfort, their Joys shall be full, they shall drink, *yea drink abundantly, and their peace be like a River*. Jesus Christ is their Life, and O what a superabounding Life is in the Lord Jesus Christ!

I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.

I. Christ is the chief Shepherd of the Sheep, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory.

(1) All other Shepherds are his servants, they have their Authority from Christ the chief Shepherd.

(2) All particular Flocks or each Company of true Believers are under the Care of the Lord Christ.

(3) And so is also the whole universal Church, he provides, leads, feeds and governs them all.

II. Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd, *now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*. He is indowed with almighty Power, no Lion, no Enemy, no Devil, can rescue one sheep out of the Hands of this Shepherd: *I give them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand*. Heb. 13. 20. Joh. 10. 28

III. Christ is a wise Shepherd.

(1) He is the Wisdom of God, nay, the only wise God.

(2) He knows all his sheep throughout all the World, the sheep of ten thousand Folds, he knows their Names, their Hearts, their Thoughts, their Wants, their Diseases, their Fears, their sorrows, their Temptations, Trials and Dangers, and knows how to supply, all their Needs.

IV. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd, a loving, tender-hearted and compassionate shepherd; *He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young*. Isa. 40. 11.

V. Christ is a living Shepherd, he lives when other shepherds die, he can raise his sheep that are dead to life.

But he that is an Hireling, and not the shepherd of the sheep, whose own the sheep are not, leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the Wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep, ver. 12.

An hired servant will not expose his Life for the sheep, but the Owner perhaps will do as David did, he will run great Hazards before he will lose his sheep: He that taketh care of Christs sheep meerly for filthy Lucre, is an Hireling, and he cares not what becomes of the Flock; so he hath but the fleece, he matters not tho the sheep perish, so that he hath his Wages, he seeks not them, but theirs; and this shews he is a false Teacher; Deceivers and cruel Wolves may enter and devour the Flock for all him.

I am the good Shepherd, and know my Sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father, and I lay down my Life for the sheep, v. 14, 15.

I am no Hireling, I have tender Bowels to my sheep, and a peculiar Knowledge of Love and Approbation of them all, and my Father knoweth me perfectly, and I have a perfect Knowledge of my Father, I know his divine Essence, his Eternity, his Decrees and Councils; *My Father and I am one*. In these Words he shews that he is the great, the chief, and the

the good Shepherd indeed, because this maketh it appear, that Christ is the great, the good, and only wise God; for none hath a perfect Knowledge of God but God himself, or he that is one in Essence with the Father.

And other sheep have I, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, &c.

Our Lord refers here to the Gentiles, and he calls them *his sheep*, that is his Elect among the Heathen Nations, they were his sheep decretively, tho then in their sins and Idolatry, and not his sheep actually, they not having then the Nature of his sheep.

I shall go no further—but observe one or two Points of Doctrine.

See my Golden Mine, which opens the latter part of this Parable.

Doct. That Christs Sheep lay dead, *dead in sin, and unless he came to give them Life, they could not live.*

1. They were dead in a law sense, the Sentence of death had pass'd upon them.

2. They were without a Principle of divine or spiritual Life.—And

(1) Such that are dead can't quicken themselves; Moreover,

(2) No Angel could satisfy for sin, which brought this death upon them, and on all Mankind.

(3) And the Law could not give them Life: *For if there had been a Law that could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law.*

Note. The Substance of what here is said was delivered at the Funeral of Mr. James Willmut, June 8. who died Jan. 5. 1701.

(4) It must be by Christ alone, because that death which we were sentenced to die, and were under, he must undergo, that gives us Life.

(5) And he must be such a Person also that could quicken or raise himself from the dead, and who could do that but he that was God? he must be Man, or else he could not die, and also he must be God, or else he could not satisfy; and therefore he must be God and man in one Person, for God could not die, nor a meer man satisfy divine Justice.

(6) It must be one that could quicken his dead sheep, and raise them to Life, and conquer Satan, who had Power over death.

Quest. What a Life is it Christ came to give his Sheep?

1. Ans. I answer, It is a Discharge from that sentence of death, that passed upon them in the first Adam, and by the Law, that they might be freed from that Obligation they were laid under: *Therefore as by the offence of one Judgment came upon all men to Condemnation: So by the Righteousness of one the free Gift came upon all men unto Justification of Life.* Or as all in Adam died, so in Christ, all united to him, or whom he was the Common Head of, are made alive.

2ly, Christ came to give them Life by infusing a vital Principle into them, by which they are quickned: *Wherein also sheep have you are risen with him thro' Faith of the Operation of God, and you being dead in your sins and uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickned.* This Life is by his infusing of his Spirit into their dead Souls.

(1) And this life it first appears in Convictions.

(2) In Regeneration.

(3) In a further Progressive Work of Mortification and Sanctification.

3ly, They shall also have the Life of Glorification.

(1) And they shall be all made like to Phil 3 21. Christ, both in Body and Soul.

(2) Be crown'd with Glory; to be crown'd with Glory, is to have the highest Glory Creatures are capable of, *1 Cor. 6:2.* they shall sit with Christ in his Throne, and judge the World with Christ.

For, is Christ a King and their Bridegroom crown'd? yea, well then they are his Queen, and shall be crowned also, and have the same Glory with him, they being *Heirs of God, and joynt Heirs with Christ.* Rom. 8. 17

3ly, They shall be with Christ where he is, and behold his Glory, and have his celestial Attendance or *Retinue*; this is the Life Christ came that they might have.

Quest. Why shall Christs Sheep have this Life?

Ans. Because Christ lives: *Because I live, you shall live also.* This refers to the twofold Life of Christ.

1. To Christs Life on Earth; I now live (as if Christ should say) on Earth for you, to procure or work out a righteousness and Life for you by my actual Obedience, (because I live.) He lived that Life as our Surety for us, to obtain the Life of Justification, and a title or Right to Glorification, and if Christ lived this life on Earth for his sheep, they shall have Life in both these respects.

2ly, Because Christ lived after he was dead, and doth live for ever for them: *Rev. 1. 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.* Well what of this?

Quest. Some may say, *Wherein lies the stress of this Argument? (i. e.) because Christ lived after he was dead, and now liveth, therefore his Elect shall live?*

Ans. It is the greatest Argument of all.

1. Because he died to pay our Penal Debt, or Debt of Eternal Punishment, our sins were laid upon him, charged on him as our surety, and he was carried to Prison, and kept a while under death; death we owed, yea, such a death as to

pacify divine Wrath, or Gods offended Justice. Now if Christ our Surety lives no more, or riseth not again, we are undone; for our Life of Justification, as it refers to a Discharge from Hell and Wrath, depends wholly upon Christs being discharged out of Prison, and so living again: For if God doth not discharge him, or Justice doth not acquit him, we cannot be discharged; and Justice be sure would not acquit him until our debt be fully paid. I shall (as if our Lord should say) in a little time die, but I shall live again, *and because I shall live again, you shall live also*: I shall be raised from the dead, or have a Resurrection, and so I die personating you that are my sheep, and when I rise again, I rise for your Justification, to free you for ever from Condemnation, and the Wrath that is to come. Now therefore since he was discharged from death as our great Representative, all his sheep were then virtually discharged also in him, and shall actually also be all discharged when they obtain a vital Union with him.

3ly, Christ lives now in Heaven for his Sheep, and therefore they shall live; for he ascended up into Heaven as their Representative or Forerunner, to shew that Justice had now nothing to charge his Sheep withall; the Father took him into Heaven, and set him down at his *Joh. 16. 8. own Right Hand, and the World sees him no more*, — To convince us, that his Righteousness will carry us to Heaven; *he shall convince the World of Righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more*. Nay, my Brethren, all Christs Sheep were virtually glorified, when Christ was glorified in Heaven; and therefore they shall all be glorified in Heaven also. And see what a Life Christ now lives in Heaven, such a Life his sheep shall have, because his Life is the cause of their Life, and the Assurance of it: *Heb. 6. 19, 20. Which hope we have, as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast, which entereth into that within the Vail. — whither the Forerunner is for us entered.*

See what I say, Paul confirms in this place, viz. that Christ took Possession of Heaven for all his sheep.

4ly, Christs sheep shall live by virtue of that Union they have with him, I mean that blessed vital Union: doth the Head Live always, and die no more? and can the Body or any Member thereof die? no surely, that is impossible. Christ is the Mystical Head, and all united to him in the sense I speak of, are his Mystical Body, and our Head lives, ever lives, and therefore the whole Body shall live also.

Shall the Root of the Tree live, and may the Branches of such a Root who can preserve its Branches, die? which hath

such Abundance of sap in it, Christ must not suffer one Branch of his to be cut off? nor can he lose any member without having an imperfect Body; will a Body suffer a member to die and be cut off, that can preserve every one of them? And tho a natural Root, or a natural Body, can't preserve every Branch, or every Member, yet Christ can, and he says, his sheep shall never perish. Therefore, because Christ lives, they shall live also.

5ly, Because Christ lives in us who are his sheep, therefore we shall live, neither sin, Devils, nor Death can separate us from the Spirit of Christ, nor from the Love of Christ; tho Death may separate our Souls from our Bodies, yet Death cannot separate us from the Spirit: *I will Joh. 14. 16 pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*. What to do, to abide with us for a Day, a Month, or a Year? see what he says; *that he may abide with you for ever*. My Brethren, it is Christ in you the Hope of Glory, and having the Spirit in you, and dwell in you for ever! is a sure ground of hope of your living for ever. *And if Christ is in you, the Body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is Life because of Righteousness*. Our Souls or Spirits are Life, or alive, because the holy Spirit dwelleth in them, or is the vital Principle of our Souls, as the Soul is the vital Principle of the Body. Death doth not, cannot separate the Spirit of God from our immortal Souls, and by that Spirit that eternally remains in our Souls, shall our Bodies be quickened at the last day: *He that raised Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*; not dwelleth in your dead Bodies; no, but in your living Souls.

6ly, Because Christ lives now in Heaven for us a Life of Intercession; he prays that we may live, and not die, or that our Faith may not fail, or never fail, and that the Spirit may supply all our Wants, and that we may be kept alive in our Souls, and be at last with him, *Heb. 7. 25. where he is: He ever lives to make intercession for us* — Father, I will that they that thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, &c. *Joh. 17. 24*

7ly, Because Christ lives as our Guardian, Surety or Trustee, to take Care of us, and to supply all our Needs, and because we have eternal Life in the seed and earnest of it now, and by the Spirit are also sealed unto the day of Redemption; and thus Christ is come that his sheep might have Life, and have that Life made sure to them for ever. *Eph. 1. 13, 14. Eph 4. 30.*

U S E.

1. I infer, The Love of Christ to his sheep is wonderful.

2. That

2. That it is not because our Graces are alive and lively, or that we are in a lively Frame, that we shall live; no, but because he lives, and came that we might live, or because he lives with such a fulness in him.

3. Infer, The Life of Christs sheep is a sure and certain, nay, an everlasting Life: *He that believeth in me shall never die.*

4. Then let us not fear death, nor mourn inordinately for such that die in the Lord.

But to proceed.

Verf. 16.

Other Sheep have I, that are not of this Fold, and them I must bring.

2. Doct. That all Christs Sheep, or all his Elect, who are not yet called, he must bring into a state of Grace here, and unto a state of Glory hereafter, he calls them his Sheep. They are

1. His by choice, or decretively they are his sheep. *I have much People in this City, &c. — The Lord knows them that are his.*

In speaking to this,

1. I shall shew what his bringing them doth denote.

2. Shew why he must bring them.

1. It denotes they are before called afar off, or in a state of Alienation from God.

2. It signifies his absolute design of Love, and Purpose of Grace towards the Jer. 29. 11. Gentiles: *I know the Thoughts I have towards you, Thoughts of Peace, &c. Yea I have spoken it, and I will bring it to pass, I have purposed it, I will do it.* See Eph. 1. 9, 10.

3. It denotes the means Christ was to use in order to bring them home, who were not yet called, or their effectual Vocation, and so his removing that Enmity that was in their Minds, and Darkness that was in their Understandings: *He will give them a new Heart.* Ezek. 36. 26.

4. It implies his putting forth his almighty Power in bringing them to God, or his working Faith in them. Eph. 1. 19, 20.

5. It denotes his bringing out of a state of Wrath, into a state of Grace, or out of a state of death, into a state of Life and Peace, and from a state of Bondage, into a state of Liberty, and out of the World into his own Fold, or his adding them to his Church, and making them Fellow Heirs with the Saints and Household of God. Eph. 2. 19, 20.

6. Or as he died for them, so he will renew and save them.

Secondly, *Why must Jesus Christ bring them?*

Christ must bring them into a state of Grace,

1. Because they were given to him by the Father: *All that the Father gave me shall come unto me, &c.* Joh. 6. 37.

2. Because he struck Hands with the Father in the Covenant of Peace, and engaged to bring them, and his Covenant he cannot break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips.

3. Because he died for them, and in their stead; *The Just for the Unjust, that he might bring them unto God.* 1 Pet. 3. 18.

4. Because the Decree of Election must stand.

5. Because naturally they are all dead, and none but he can quicken them, and so bring them.

6. Because they are given to be Members of his mystical Body, and his Body cannot be perfect without them.

U S E.

1. O Wonder what Christ hath done to bring his sheep home, and also at that Obligation he laid himself under to do this, *Them I must bring*, let it cost me what it will, my Blood must be shed, I know to bring them: *I lay down my Life for my sheep.* Our Lord shewed to his Disciples how he must suffer. Mat. 16. 21

2. This presupposeth there was a Necessity, of Christ bringing his sheep home, the glory of one holy Attribute must not be eclipsed to magnifie another: *That God might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* We were all obliged to keep the Law, and to die for the Breach of it, and Christ must therefore in our Nature perfectly keep it, and die for our Violation of it. Rom. 3. 26

3. O what Love hath God shewed to his Elect in their Redemption! how is his Love, his Pity, his Wisdom, his Justice, Holiness and Power manifested thereby.

4. What Fools are they, and how blind, that think they can return to God by a Reformation of Life, or by Repentance, or by trusting in the meer Mercy of God, having no saving Knowledge of Christ crucified.

6. What evil is in sin, and at what a distance had it set us from God?

7. Be thankful, and also be filled full of Joy, you that Christ among the Gentiles hath brought home. And

8. This also may stir us up to pray for the fulness of the Gentiles to be brought in; for Christ must bring them in, even all of them that are his sheep.

The Parable of God being an Husband-man.

JOH. XV. 1, 2, 3, &c.

*I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husband-man, ver. 1.
Every Branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, &c.*

THE Occasion of this Parable some think, was from our Saviours Celebration of the holy Supper; for he newly had administred that unto his Disciples. Others think, that he saw a Vine as he passed over the *Mount of Olives*; see our late Annotators. It is doubtful what might be the immediate Occasion thereof.

We will therefore proceed to consider the Scope and chief Design of our Lord herein.

*The Scope
of this Parable.*

1. It may be, as I conceive, to shew that God the Father is first in all spiritual Operation, or the prime and Original Author of all spiritual Blessings.

1. Is Christ as Mediator planted as the true Vine, why our Lord shews us here that it was the Father, that blessed Husband-man, that planted him. He is the first and chiefest Plant of Gods Right Hand planting. And

1. He was first planted in that eternal Covenant, or holy Compact, that was betwixt the Father and the Son.

2. And the Father also planted him in this World, by preparing him a Body to do, and suffer for us.

3. The Father also grafts or planteth all those Plants that are united to the Lord Jesus Christ, provided they are truly united to his Person, who are fruitful; for such, and none but such bring forth fruit to his Praise.

2ly, It may be to shew the Necessity of our being united to Jesus Christ, if ever we bring forth fruit to God; and that we have no Ability or Power of our own, to do any thing which is truly spiritually good.

3ly, To shew that in Christ Mystical (for so is Christ taken sometimes) are some barren Branches, I mean in the visible Church, and that such shall in time be cut off, and cast into the fire.

4. To discover to us, that all who obtain to true spiritual Union with Christ, (who partake of the holy Spirit) do abide in him, and bring forth Fruit unto

eternal Life, as our Lord himself positively shews in *ver. 16.* and that there is a Necessity of our abiding in him, in order to our Fruitfulness.

But to open the Parts.

I am the true Vine, &c.

That is, I am the true Messiah, the true Saviour, the right Plant and true Root of all Grace; even he only that communicates Life unto the Souls of men, or he whom my Father hath ordained and planted to be Supporter of all his Elect, out of whom they must grow, being first united to me, if ever made fruitful unto God.

*The parts
opened.*

Quest. But why is Christ compared to a Vine?

1. A Vine is not a lovely, stately and amiable Plant to look upon, as some other Trees are; it is not so lofty as the Cedar, nor so strong as the Oak, nor so beautiful as the Palm Tree.—So the Lord Jesus in his Humiliation appeared not to carnal Eyes, to be beautiful or glorious, as many Princes and Kings of the Earth, who shine forth in outward Glory, Beauty and Grandure. But as it was prophesied of him; *He shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire him.* So what Form is there in a Vine? *Isa. 53. 2, 3.*

2. Yet perhaps it may be, also because of the honourable Names given to the Vine above all other Trees.

(1) 'Tis called a goodly Vine.

(2) The Noble Vine.

Now however contemptible our blessed Lord seemed to be when on earth, yet he hath a Name above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow; (not at the naming of Jesus.) What a Name hath he who is called the Son of God, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince

*The Vine
hath honourable
Names
given to it.
Jer. 2. 21.
Ezek. 17. 8.
Ps. 80. 9.
Christ hath
honourable
Names.
Phil. 2. 9.*

Prince of peace, the wonderful Counsellor ! and what Name excells his Name *Jesus* ?

Mat. 1. 21. *And his Name shall be called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins. And what a sweet and noble Name is that Immanuel ! They shall call his Name Immanuel, viz. God with us, or God in our Nature.*

A Vine is full of sap, so is Christ the true Vine. 3ly, A Vine wonderfully aboundeth with Sap and inward vertue, bearing and nourishing many branches, which shoot forth perhaps beyond most Plants. So the Lord Jesus Christ is full of spiritual Sap,

Col. 2. 3. *full of divine Life. In him are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. No Vine is so full of Sap, as Jesus Christ is full of*

Joh. 1. 14. *Grace. And we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And as the Vine communicates*

Joh. 1. 16. *of its Sap to the branches, so doth the Lord Christ communicate of his grace. And of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. And O how fruitful is the true Vine, and what a multitude of branches grow out of this sacred Plant, many Churches, and multitudes of true Believers.*

4ly, The Vine is a most fruitful Plant ; what Tree excells it in this respect ? When God promised Fruitfulness, it is expressed by the Vine : *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful Vine.* But how fruitful then is the true Vine, (1.) Unto God ! What glory hath he brought unto God the Father ! He produced much fruit to God in one day, even three thousand souls. (2) And also how fruitful hath he been, and is unto us, in his Life, and in his Death, and in his Resurrection, and in his Intercession !

The Vine bears choice fruit. 5ly, The Vine bears and brings forth choice and pleasant Fruit : What are more sweet and pleasant than Grapes in some Countreys ? and how good, pleasant and reviving is the richest Wine ! it is a Cordial, and makes glad a heavy Heart.

Psa. 104. 15. *And wine that maketh glad the Heart of man. Give wine to those that are of a heavy heart ; let him drink and forget his poverty. Nay Wine is said to cheer the*

Pro. 31. 6, 7 *heart both of God and man. — When the*

Isa. 24. 11. *new wine faileth the merry hearted sigh, and all joy is darkned. Jesus Christ the true*

Vine far exceeds the Vine in this respect ; for how pleasant is that fruit which he hath brought forth by his Obedience unto God the Father ! it is of a sweet smell-

Eph. 5. 2. *ing savour ; and unto us what can be so sweet and delicious, or so excellent and precious to our Taste ? His love is better*

Cant. 1. *than Wine, more chearing, more restorative, more reviving ; nor is there any*

such Cordial in the World to revive a drooping and heavy heart : How sweet is the wine of Reconciliation, Redempti-

on, Union and Communion, Pardon of Sin, Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the

Mar. 22. *Holy Ghost ! All is the Fruit of the true*

Vine, for all this sweet Fruit hath Christ brought forth, by his Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession. And they that drink of this Wine, forget their sorrows, it is so chearing, so reviving, so strengthening, so restorative, no Cordial in the World is like this. *Are the Consola-*

tions of God small with thee ?

Job 15. 11

6ly. The Vine is a shadowy Plant ; we read of mens *sitting under their own Vines* ; what pleasant Arbours are made of Vines ! So Jesus Christ is a shadow to us, he shadows us from the scorching heat of Gods wrath, and from the wrath, rage and fury of the Devil and wicked men ; and hence he is also said to be an *hiding place*

Isa. 32. 2

from the Tempest, and as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land.

7ly. The Fruit of the Vine is bruised and pressed that the Wine may flow forth : So was Jesus Christ bruised under the pressure of divine Anger, that we might drink plentifully of his Fruit. Without the bruising and pressing the Grapes, we can have no Wine ; so unless the Lord Jesus Christ had been bruised, we could have had no Wine of true Consolation, viz. no peace with God, no Justification, no Pardon of Sin ; therefore it is said, *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief.*

Isa. 53. 5

But this spiritual Vine (as I hinted) far excells all Vines.

(1.) Other Vines only bear Fruit but once a Year, in the Summer only ; but this Vine bears Fruit for our Souls continually, both in the Winter of Afflictions and Tribulation, or Adversity, as well as

Christ the true Vine excells all Vines.

in the Summer of Prosperity ; go when you will to Christ the True Vine, and you shall find he is full of Fruit, full of Grace ; there is comfort in him, strength in him, Consolation in Jesus Christ.

(2.) Other Vines bear fruit only that comforts and cheers the Body and natural spirits ; but the Fruit of this Vine cheers, revives and strengthens our Immortal Souls.

(3.) The Fruit of other Vines, viz. Grapes or Wine, may and doth soon decay, and is good for little, but the fruit of the true Vine never decays, but yields us everlasting strength, everlasting Consolation.

(4.) The Fruit of other Vines may be taken to Excess, nay it may surfeit, and prove mortal to him that receives it, but no man can eat or drink of the Fruit of this Vine to excess, neither can they be surfeited thereby ; no, they that are Christs Friends are bid to eat and drink, yea to drink abundantly of this fruit.

Cant. 5. 1

(5.) Other Vines are feeble or weak, and need to be supported ; but this Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Eternal God, and needs none to support him ; no, he is able to uphold and support us, yea the whole

whole

whole Church, and every weak Believer, tho never so feeble; and no marvel, because he *upholds all things by the word of his Power.* Heb. 1. 2, 3

And my Father is the husbandman.

That is, he is like unto, or may be compared to an Husbandman: Now God may be compared to an Husbandman in respect of these things following.

What an Husbandman doth denote.

See the Parable of the Sower opened, Mat. 13 RoL 1.

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1. A Husbandman hath Ground to till, Seed to sow, and Trees to plant, and servants to employ: — So and in like manner the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath Ground to till or manure, viz. the Hearts of all his Elect, whose Hearts naturally are hard, rocky and barren. Our Saviour compares mens hearts to ground, Mat. 13. nay to four sorts of ground.

2. God also hath seed to sow, which is his Word and holy Doctrine, this is called the incorruptible Seed.

3. God also hath Trees to plant; he indeed as you heard first planted Jesus Christ this true Vine; Christ was early planted, and reason for it, because all other spiritual Trees or Plants grow out of his Root: Also all the godly are called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. — Moreover it is said, The trees of the Lord are full of sap; All Trees which our heavenly Father hath not planted, will not bear any good Fruit, but shall be pluckt up.

What Servants the great Husbandman doth employ.

Isa. 43. 10.

Isa. 49. 3.

4. God hath also Servants to employ. (1.) Jesus Christ considered as Mediator is Gods Servant. Behold my Servant, — whom I have chosen, &c. Thou art my servant, O Israel. The Lord Jesus is the best Servant that God ever had, and he hath done the hardest Work; no other Servant indeed could do what Christ hath done, nor ever brought that glory unto him; he did not only sweat at his work, but bled also, yea sweat great drops of Blood.

(2.) His Ministers also are his Servants whom he employs in his Work; We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. O what an honour is it to be fellow-workers with Jesus Christ!

(3.) All Believers are Gods Servants, whom he employs to work in his Vineyard. Moreover, he having the command of all in Heaven, Earth and Hell, he can make use, and sometimes doth, of wicked men, and Devils also, to do some work for his Glory.

Secondly, An Husbandman denotes one that is skilful, one that is wise, and knows how to manage Husbandry. God is all-wise, Wisdom it self; he is wise in heart, he knows all the Mysteries of his own Counsels, Purposes and Decrees, and how to do all his work, and to do it also

in the proper time and season; some Husbandmen are unskilfull, but God is infinite in wisdom and knowledge, no winds nor weather, storms nor tempests, can hinder him from working, no not Men nor Devils. I will work and who shall let it. Isa. 43. 13.

Thirdly, An Husbandman hath a Stock, a great Husbandman must be rich, and have a good Stock to manage all, or to defray the charge of all his Husbandry: Now the great God cannot want a Stock, for all things in Heaven and Earth are his.

Jesus Christ is Gods. All things are yours, ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods. He is not only his Son, but his Servant; also (as you newly heard) all the Riches of Christ as Mediator, he received from God the Father, the holy Spirit and all Grace is his, the Word and Ordinauces, and the Promises are this Husbandmans, the Angels are his, and Ministers are his, therefore he hath store of Riches, or Stock sufficient to manage his Spiritual Husbandry.

Fourthly, A Husbandmans Life is a laborious Life, and great diligence also it requires. God is an almighty Workman. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Yet nothing is hard with God, tho his work is too hard for Men or Angels to do, and that also as he is considered an Husbandman. Is it not hard work to make hard and rocky ground good ground, and to cause seed to grow in Rocky Hearts? Also to make Trees that naturally are Evil, and that bring forth evil and bitter Fruit, to bring forth good Fruit, and turn them into good Trees; nay, he can cause Trees that never bear, to bear abundantly. This Husbandman can make the proud humble, the carnal Spiritual, the earthly Heavenly.

Fifthly, An Husbandman denotes an Employment that there is an absolute necessity of; for without the Labour of the Husbandman the World cannot long subsist or stand: If there was no plowing nor sowing, we should all in a little time be starved; we have need therefore to say, God speed the Plow. So also there is as great necessity of this great and gracious Husbandmans Labour, for if God had not planted Jesus Christ the true Vine, we and all Mankind must have perished for ever, and if he doth not plow up the fallow Ground of our Hearts, none can, and also sow the Seed of the Word, and plant us in Christ, we must perish. Ye are Gods Husbandry. It is this Husbandman that causeth the Seed to take root in our Hearts, it is God that transplants us out of the first Adam into the second Adam.

Sixthly,

God in all his husbandry aims at his own glory. Sixthly, An Husbandman, in all his Labours aims at his own profit, though thousands receive Advantages by his Cost and Pains also. So God in all he doth in working about our Salvation, designed his own glory: Nay, in his creating, preserving, and governing the World, this was that which he aimed at; tho his work properly profits him not. Can there be any thing added to his Perfections? but if we have profit, God reaps glory to his own Name, that is, it tends to raise his Honour and to magnifie his Name; for there is no addition can be made to his essential Glory.

Ila. 49. 3. And he said, Thou art my servant in whom I will be glorified. These are the words of God the Father unto the Son as Mediator; also in his forming us, renewing us again by his Spirit, what doth he say?

Ila. 43. 21. This People have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my Praise. — The Lord hath

Pro. 15. 4. made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. Also in our Fruitfulness, our Lord saith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit.*

Joh. 15. 8.

The spiritual husbandman makes a fence about his people. Seventhly, An Husbandman fences in his Ground, his Fields, and makes walls about his Vineyard; so the good Husbandman by his common Providence preserves all the things that he hath made; all things are governed by his wise Providence, but about his Church and every true Christian he makes a strong wall, that is, his special Providence is over them.

Job 1. 10. Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about all he hath, &c. — I will

Zech. 1. 5. be to her a wall of Fire. Which some think refers to the holy Angels, who are compared to Fire, and they are as a Wall round about his People; that no wild Beasts may hurt or devour them; for a wall of Fire is the best defence in a Wilderness from cruel and devouring Beasts.

God views his Corn and his Trees, to see how they thrive and bring forth fruit. Eighthly, An Husbandman views, and often well observes how his Corn and Trees grow or thrive; and takes good notice which of his Trees are barren, and also expecteth Fruit according to the cost he bestows, and the pains he takes; so the holy God views and well observes his Church and all his Saints, and takes notice how they grow in grace, and who are barren among them, and also looks for Fruit according to the cost and pains he is at. *And he looked that it should bring forth grapes. But,*

Ila. 5. 2.

2ly, God excels all Husbandmen.

1. Other Husbandmen many times want Stock, and some of them want skill, and so wax poor, but in God are all perfections of Riches and Wisdom.

2. Other Husbandmen can't cause it to rain, nor give Increase to their Labours and pains, or make their Corn and Trees to grow, but God giveth, and can give Rain at his pleasure. *My word shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* *Ila. 55. 11.*

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. *Verf. 2.*

Some are in Christ mystical, viz. in his Church, who are not united to Christ by the Spirit, or by the Faith of the Operation of God, and these bring not forth fruit.

There is a two-fold being in Christ.

1. By an external or visible Profession.

2. By vertue of a true spiritual Union; and such that are internally in Christ, or have a vital Union with him, shall bring forth fruit. See *Verf. 16.*

Every Branch in me that beareth not fruit.

By Branches are meant Professors of the Gospel, or Church-members; and some from the Original read it, *Every branch that bringeth not fruit in me*, or that is not truly united to me. This seems to be the true sence of the Text; for without a Person is in Christ, or savingly united to the Lord Jesus, God regards not that fruit he brings forth; no, it must be Fruit brought forth in Christ, or of such that are in him: And what seeming Fruit soever such bring forth that are not in Christ, God taketh away; Hypocrites may bring forth some kind of Fruit for a time, but 'tis not by vertue of their Union with Christ, and therefore not good or right Fruit; so that there is a being in Christ, and not a being in Christ, or a being externally in him, but not savingly or spiritually being in him, and these bring not forth fruit in him.

He taketh away.

Either he takes away their Gifts, or leaves them to a carnal and worldly spirit, or else gives them up to strong Delusions, or lets them fall into some one sin or another, and so he cuts them off by the Bill of Church Discipline, or by Excommunication, or otherwise he may take them away by withdrawing his restraining Grace, and common Influences of his Spirit from them, or smite them with blindness of Mind, and hardness of Heart, and that is a dreadful taking away of such fruitless Persons, or unfruitful branches.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth that it may bring forth more fruit.

What
ways God
hath to
purge his
Saints.

Isa. 6. 7, 8.
Pro. 16. 6.

2 Cor. 7. 1.

Annotat.

The Husband prunes and purges fruitful Plants; so God purges by his Spirit and by his Word, and sometimes by his Rod all fruitful Christians: *By this therefore shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is the fruit to take away his sin: By this, that is, by Afflictions or sharp Trials, and this shall cause Jacob to blossom and bud.* God hath many ways to purge his fruitful Branches, tho the Blood of Christ alone cleanses from all sin, yet God may make use of this or that way to purifie thro' Christs Blood our Souls: by a live coal from the Altar the Iniquity of the Prophet was purged: Also Solomon saith; *By Mercy and Truth Iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from Iniquity.* By Gods Mercy in Christ, and by his Promises, (which are sometimes called his Truth) which he hath made to them that believe in Jesus: *Having these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

They that are fruitful, God will make more fruitful. *Now ye are clean thro' the Word I have spoken to you, ver. 3.* Now the Traytor is gone out from you, ye are clean, you that remain are holy Persons, ye are clean, (*i. e.*) no Hypocrites; but not clean by their own Works, no, but by Christs Word, by his Promises, by believing in him, and applying of his faithful Word to their Souls, by his Spirit, for without that his Word cleanses none.

Every Branch.

Quest. Why are Believers called Branches?

1. Ans. The Vine bears the Branches; so Christ supports Believers.

2. Branches grow out of the Vine, and by partaking of the sap of the Vine, they bring forth fruit. So Believers grow out of Christ that blessed Stock, they being first grafted into him: *From me is all thy fruit found.*

3. According to the Nature of the Vine, such is the Nature of the Branches: so every Believer grafted into Christ, partakes of his divine Nature; they are like Christ, holy, humble, meek, &c.

Abide in me, and I in you, as the Branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me, ver. 4.

These Words do not intimate there was a Possibility that they might not abide in Christ, but

1. To shew the Necessity of a vital Union with Christ, no man being able, until then to bear fruit of himself.

2. To shew this Union must remain, they must for ever abide united to Christ, if they cease not in bearing fruit.

3. To shew the Reason, why some who seem to be in him, (or are externally in him by a visible Profession, or in *Christ Mystical*) do not bear fruit, *viz.* because they are not indeed and in Truth savingly in him.

By abiding in Christ is partly meant abiding, believing his Word; so *ver. 7.* by abiding, loving him, or in the strength of their Love and Affections to him; tho a dismal storm was coming upon him, and them, and also abiding in his Spirit, or remaining spiritual, and also abiding in keeping his Commandments.

Our Lord strove by these Words to convince them, from whom, or by what means they should remain fruitful, and also to stir them up to a constant Witness to him, and in using all means for their abiding in him, and faithful to him, and also to let them know the time was near, when many who seemed to be in him, and to be his Disciples, would forsake him, as indeed they did.

I am the Vine, ye are the Branches.

Even as the Vine feeds, nourishes, supports and makes the Branches fruitful; so it is by Christ; we are fed, nourished, supported and made spiritually fruitful: and as the Branch that is not in the Vine, partakes not of its sap, so such that are not united to Christ, partake not of his spiritual Vertue.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.

These Words more clearly opens our Lords sacred Design, in repeating the same things, *viz.* that he, or that person who hath a true spiritual Union with Christ, being in him by his Spirit, and he in Christ by Faith, shall never cease bearing fruit. Also 'tis observable, that our Lord presses them to see that he himself did abide in them, as they should abide in him; neither of which was in their Power, for the Branches are passive in being grafted into the stock, the Husbandman doth that, all know: so are we in our Union with Christ, and in Regeneration. It is the good spiritual Husbandman that grafts us in to the true Vine, and he that prunes us, and doth all that is necessary to be done, to make us fruitful, and to abide fruitful.

For without me ye can do nothing, v. 5.

I am to my Members that which a Vine is to the Branches; I give Life, Strength, and Fruitfulness; the Vine may be said to abide in the Branches, by conveying Juice and Nourishment, whereby they grow, flourish and are fruitful: so Christ abideth in his Saints by his Spirit and spiritual

ritual Influences, upon which depends all their life, strength and fruit.

Without me.

Mans natural incapacity to do any thing that is spiritual good.

1. Without Union with Christ.

2. Without Influences from Christ:

Every Branch in me that beareth not fruit.

If they had been really in Christ, they had been fruitful. But some are only in him by Appearance, and so can do nothing; nothing, that is, spiritually or truly good: This Union is reciprocal: *Abide in me, and I in you.* The Jews were said to be in the True Olive, else they could not have been said to be broken off, (i.e.) they were in, and of his visible Church, but not really in Christ; and so are some in the Gospel Church, but not in Christ, nor Christ in them; for the Union between Christ and Believers is inseparable and indissoluble, like that of Christs being in the Father, and the Father in him.

Joh. 17.

3. *Without me*; that is, without Christs concurrence, cohabitation and cooperation we can do nothing.

Christ is a Head of Influence to the Body and Members: how can a Branch cut off the Vine bear fruit, it being dead, and so is every sinner that is not united to Christ, *dead in sins and trespasses.* Christ must quicken us by a principle of Life, and also excite that Principle and Habit of Grace; there is in all natural men a Privation of Power to do that which is spiritually good, an Absence, nay, a total Privation, not an Absence of radical Power, and not only a suspension of Acts, as may be in us when asleep: and as it is a total Privation in respect of Power, so it is universal (as one observes) in respect of the Subject of that Power. Every Faculty is wholly depraved, the Judgment, Will, Affections, Memory, &c. and not

Rom 8.7.

only so, but in the carnal mind is Enmity against God; they resist all good Motions, they have no Power, nor any will to receive Power, until their Hearts are changed, and their will is made willing:

Ag. 7. 51.

Ye always resist the holy Ghost, &c.— Ye will not come to me, your wills are rebellious.

If ye abide in me, and my Word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Such abide in Christ, in whom his Word abides, his Promises abide in them, so as to believe them, and his Precepts abide in them so as to obey them, and the Prayers of such in all things agreeable to the Will of God shall be answered:

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and so shall ye be my Disciples, v. 8.

By virtue of our Union with Christ we bring forth much fruit, and that fruit which glorifies God, or is to the Praise of his rich Grace: were the fruit, the Product of mans own natural Powers, it would glorify the sorry Creature, and be to the Praise of mans free-will, and not

tend to glorify Gods free Grace. But all spiritual Fruit, being solely from God, it tends to the Glory of God, as it causeth such to shine forth in Holiness and good Works before men.

But this Parable might seem yet dark unto the Disciples, and our Lord might perceive they might fear, that tho their Hearts were right with God, and were truly in him, that they might cease bearing Fruit, and wither, and so be cut off. He therefore (finally to satisfy them, that none of his Words should be so understood) tells them in ver. 16.

Ye are my Friends; and again saith; Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, &c. v. 16.

I have, as if our Lord should have said, told you of some that bring not forth fruit in me, tho they seem to be in me, and are Members of my visible Church; but do not you think that you are of that sort that abide not in a Profession of my Name, or may become withered Branches, and be cast into the Fire: for you are not only called, but also chosen, chosen to Salvation, and not that you chose me first, and so I chose you, as being fruitful Persons; no, but I have chosen you, you have not chosen me first: I loved you first, and therefore you love me, and have chosen me, and I have ordained you to be holy, as well as to be eternally happy; yea I have ordained you to bear Fruit, and that your Fruit should also remain, that you might not cease bearing Fruit, and so like others wither, and be cut off, and perish for ever. Do not think it is possible for you to fall finally and totally away, and be cast into Hell; O mistake not my Meaning in this Parable.

Indeed, my Brethren, had not our Saviour added these Words, and explained his Sense and Meaning to us, some Expressions might seem to favour what the Arminians too boldly affirm from this Parable; but what is said in this Verse, tends utterly to stop their mouths, and silence them for ever.

Now from the whole I might note these Propositions following.

1. That God the Father is the prime or original Author of all Spiritual Blessings and Privileges.

2. That Jesus Christ the Son of God considered as Mediator, is the Root or blessed Tree, Vine and true Olive, into whom all the Elect are grafted, united, and so become fruitful.

3. That some who seem to be in Christ, and to bring forth fruit, do not bring forth fruit in him, or by virtue of a real and spiritual Union with him, and so they wither and

It is impossible for true Believers to cease bearing fruit, or to wither and perish for ever.

and shall be cut off, or taken away, and perish eternally.

4. That all Gods Elect are chosen and ordained to be fruitful, and to remain fruitful all their days on earth, as well as to eternal Life in Heaven.

But I having prosecuted the Substance of all these Truths under other Parables, and wanting room, shall not speak to them here.

U S E.

1. Let all Hypocrites, from what hath been said, tremble, or such who seem to be in Christ, but are not.

2. Let all Believers who are united to the Lord Jesus, rejoyce, and see what a happy and secure state they are in, tho they may seem to wither, yet they shall revive again.

1. Be exhorted to admire the Love of God the Father, and ascribe all Glory

unto him as the Author of all Grace, and the first Person in all Divine Operations, as well as he is the first Person in the Godhead, or of the Trinity.

2. Ascribe all Glory to the Son, for as all things are from the Father, so all things are thro' the Son; all Grace and divine Blessings were purchased for us by his Blood, and we have them as the fruit of his Mediation.

3. Ascribe all Glory to the holy Spirit, by whom we are renewed and helped to believe, and to apply the Blood of Christ to our Souls, and who by his immediate Influences hath made us fruitful, and shall be helped to abide so unto eternal Life.

And now to close all, let every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, Rev. 5.13. and under the Earth, and such that are in the Sea, and all that are in them, say, Blessing, Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto him that sitteth on the Throne. and to the Lamb for ever and ever, Amen.

F I N I S.

Errata in the Supplement.

PAG. 3. Col. 1. Lin. 54. for say read lay. p. 3. c. 2. l. 22. for nigher read greater. Ibid. l. 26. for was r. were. p. 8. c. 1. l. 53. for raises r. raise. P. 8. col. 2. l. 53. add, or in an, an is wanting. P. 15. col. 2. lin. 28. for says r. say. P. 22. c. 1. l. 34. for there r. therefore. P. 23. c. 1. l. 35. for liveless r. lifeless. P. 23. c. 2. l. 48. blot out its. P. 28. c. 1. l. 33. for firmer r. firm, and for suerer r. sure. P. 28. c. 2. l. 2. add Christ dwelleth not there. P. 30. and p. 31. the doctrinal Notes in the Margent are misplaced. P. 34. c. 1. l. 3. blot out or Soften. P. 82. c. 2. l. 20. add their. P. 82. c. 2. l. 23. read that are rich. P. 89. c. 1. l. 1. for God r. good. P. 91. c. 2. l. 16. for we r. be. P. 92. c. 2. l. 10. blot out doth. P. 104. Ser. 18. l. 24. read is in, (in) is wanting. P. 117. c. 2. l. 13. for fall r. fail. P. 121. c. 1. l. 30. for for r. of. P. 123. c. 2. l. 19. r. they seek it as it were. P. 123. c. 1. l. 48. blot out for.

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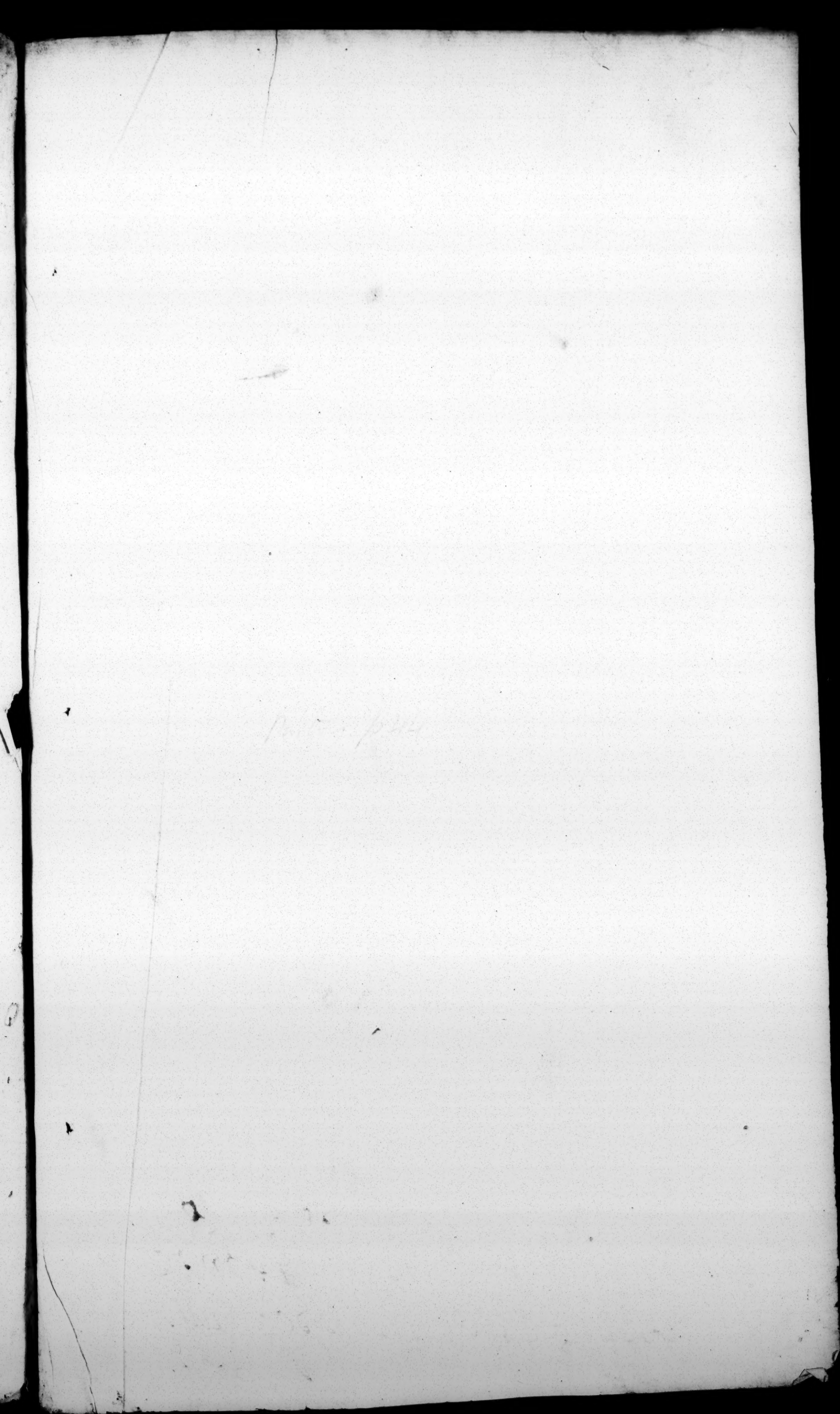
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